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ABSTRACT

Papers presented at "The Future of Literature in the Community College" conference are included in this proceedings. The following papers are presented: (1) "The Value of Literature in the Community College Curriculum: One Credo, Several Courses," by Carol Barrett; (2) "The Use of Literature in the Teaching of English as a Second Language," by Anne Marie Clougherty; (3) "Using African-American Literature in the Teaching of Writing to Community College Students," by Joyce H. Scott; (4) "The Uses of Film in Teaching the Literature Course," by Gail Forman; (5) "Beyond the Parson's Field: Third World Literature in the Community College Classroom," by Judith Hall; (6) "Using Cross-Cultural/Ethnic Literature to Teach Writing to Non-Traditional College Students," by Diane Harper; (7) "The Word Must Fit the Need: Using Video and Film to Teach Literature in the Community College," by Robin Herndobler; (8) "Expectation and Reality: Teaching Literature in the Rural Community College," by Donna Karber-Gardner; (9) "Literature -- An Invaluable Aid in Teaching Reading Comprehension Skills to Remedial or Developmental Level Community College Students," by Loisjean Komai and Carlene Wingfield; (10) "Teaching the Bible as Literature," by Robert R. Lawrence; (11) "Umbrella Courses: Shelters and Showcase," by Kathryn Lillyman; (12) "Teaching Writing through Literature: Toward the Acquisition of a Knowledge Base," by RoseAnna Mueller; (13) "Is There Life before Literature?" by John Pekich; (14) "King Arthur in Basic Writing," by John P. Pufahl; (15) "Literature Courses in the Community College: Some Strategies for Survival," by Samuel J. Rogal; (16) "Using Literature as a Resource for Teaching Composition," by A. T. Sawyer; (17) "Poems by Computer: Introducing Poetry in a High-Tech Society," by Marlys Marshall Styne; (18) "The Imagemaker in Matrixland or How to Establish a Literature Course in a Community College in Three Easy (?) Steps," by Paul A. Sukys; (19) "The American Short Story and the Research Course," by Beverly Tinsley; (20) "Classic Poems, Some Vintage Literary Guidance, and the Contemporary Composition Student," by Carol Kyros Walker; and (21) "Teaching Critical Thinking in the English Literature Survey Course," by Helen (Lyn) Ward. Summaries of six additional papers are included. (EJV)

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Proceedings

The Future of Literature in the Community College

First National Conference

Chicago, Illinois
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Table of Contents

Foreward	1
The Value of Literature in the Community College Curriculum: One Credo, Several Courses	3
The Use of Literature in the Teaching of English as a Second Language	8
Using African-American Literature in the Teaching of Writing to Community College Students	12
Feminist Criticism and Core Literature Courses: Current Theory and Future Practice	20
The Uses of Film in Teaching the Literature Course	22
Teaching Literature by the Composition Method	26
"Beyond the Parson's Field": Third World Literature in the Community College Classroom	27
"Once More Unto the Breach, Dear Friends": Charging an Honors Program	35
Using Cross-Cultural/Ethnic Literature to Teach Writing to Non-Traditional College Students	37
The Word Must Fit the Need: Using Video and Film To teach Literature in the Community College	42
Expectation and Reality: Teaching Literature in the Rural Community College	47
Literature--an Invaluable Aid in Teaching Reading to Remedial Level Community College Students	54

Teaching the Bible as Literature 59

Umbrella Courses: Shelters and Showcase 69
Teaching Writing Through Literature: Toward the Acquisition of a Knowledge Base 76

Is There Life Before Literature? 97

King Arthur in Basic Writing 104

Literature Courses in the Community College: Some Strategies for Survival 110

The Use of Literature in the Teaching of Writing to Non-Traditional Students 125

Using Literature as a Resource for Teaching Composition 127

Great Books or Textual Studies?: Polar Agendas for the Eighties 133

Poems by Computer: Introducing Poetry in a High-Tech Society 135

The Imagemaker in Matrixland or How To Establish a Literature Course in Three Easy (?) Steps 164

Teaching Literature Through Television and Radio in Chicago, 1975-1985 179

The American Short Story and the Research Course 181

Classic Poems, Some Vintage Literary Guidance, and the Contemporary Composition Student 186

Teaching Critical Thinking in the English Literature Survey Courses 191

Honors Programs and Literature in the Community College 213

Foreward

The first national conference on "The Future of Literature in the Community College" was conceived of and developed coincident with a number of faculty-initiated activities that were begun in autumn of 1984 at the City Colleges of Chicago; these included new publications, partnership programs with a number of area colleges and universities and disciplinary workshops, among other such activities. Certainly the moment was apropos for taking action, for as many of the presentors clearly pointed out, literature courses in the previous ten-year period had been decimated. The time was appropriate in another sense, since a discernible need was experienced by many faculty for increased professional activity, including the reexamination and reinvigoration of their disciplines, literature among them.

While committed to the proposition that offerings in literature had to be strengthened and a conference on that subject might, therefore, be useful, the conveners were far from certain, when they sent out the call for papers, what the results would be. However, they were gratified to find that they had touched upon a subject that their colleagues, nationwide, had been giving much thought to. And not only thought. For it became clear as the submissions began to arrive that the thinking had been translated into activity, with many positive results.

An outward manifestation of all of this activity was the well-attended conference itself; there was representation at the two-day meeting of faculty from more than half of the states, including Alaska.

One final note: In preparing these proceedings, we asked the conference presentors, in all instances, for a written version of their address. Not all were prepared to do so. In those cases, we used the summaries they had given us prior to the conference. However, in one or two cases summaries had not been available, and, consequently, there is no record of these talks.

You will notice that the arrangement is essentially alphabetical, except in those instances in which there were multiple presentors in a given session. In those cases, you will find the group listed under the last name of the initial speaker.

Finally it should be pointed out that because papers meant to be read are quite different in approach from those submitted for publication, no attempt has been made to create an artificially uniform presentation; therefore, these papers have undergone only minimal editing. They are reproduced here essentially as they were sent to us.

Richard H. Lerner
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Coordinator of Special Projects

City Colleges of Chicago
July 1986

The Value of Literature in the Community College Curriculum:
One Credo, Several Courses

by Carol Barrett
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The future of literature in the Community College curriculum is assured, in my mind, because of the value of literature, period. Literature matters in the larger scheme of things. That comes from a book on reading Jane Austen, but how many of our students read Jane Austen? Evidently, not everyone shares my simplistic view. As a teacher of literature in the humanities division of a community college, my eyes are often drawn to articles entitled "Humanities sorely neglected," "Why should the Humanities matter?" "Humanities decline," etc. William Bennett has attributed some of this negativism to "failure of nerve and faith" on the part of many teachers in the humanities. This literature teacher has the faith. I sat up straighter when Terry O'Banion, in a 1984 address, compared the teacher's quest for quality in education to the Knight's quest for the Holy Grail. Of course, I knew he meant me, the teacher of literature, because I was teaching Malory's Morte d'Arthur in my British Literature I class, at the time, and Tennyson's Idylls of the King in British Literature II. And I have the nerve to teach World Literature I, the Ancients (I mean the Book of Genesis and Gilgamesh a la John Gardner if students will try) and the Odyssey through the Renaissance at a community college where philosophy guarantees high academic standards and "instruction responsive to student needs."

Perhaps now, I dare to change the title of my pressentation to a question: what value does literature offer to the general education of a career oriented student? I had better be able to answer this because Austin Community College has an open admissions policy and a student body in which many are majoring in technical subjects. I insist on the value of literature in the lives of all the students, not just those who perceive literature courses as leading to Associate Degrees or as preparation for and transfer credit to four year educational institutions.

As a literature teacher in a two year college, I cannot require more hours in my field for the student majoring in business or computer science. I can urge a curriculum that helps students remain fluid and becoming, because I want for them, in addition to skill at banking or nursing, an openness, an imagination, a confidence in themselves as human beings who can read the Odyssey and feel proud to be. Reading good and great literature should keep student and teacher open to change. Unlike some other classes which students may take, literature is not a science "to which exact definitions can be applied," except of course for terms and critical methods of analysis. It is an art, the success of which depends on "personal persuasiveness," mine and the literature's. I persuade by my own best scholarship, my teaching, which I hope occasionally reflects inspiration, and by relating word images (I am a literature teacher, not a philosopher) to ideas and on to real life. I always include excerpts from John Henry Newman's "The Idea of a University" in my British Literature II class to tantalize students and provoke them into arguing with me about the old cliche of "knowledge for its own sake." I'll probably never read Daniel J. Kevles' "Genetics and the Uses of Human Heridity," but in a review I was struck by his explanation of his own academic background in relation to his doctoral dissertation on the history of American physics. He said, "I was seduced by the liberal arts requirements (emphasis mine). We must require literature.

I insist on literature in the Community College Curriculum because our students are adults, capable of learning how to go on learning, to ask questions and to appreciate, in the sense of understanding, others' values. From Job to Yeats to Chinua Achebe, things do fall apart in adult lives. What is more exciting and valuable then to discuss a universal theme like that in a class of diverse American and foreign students? Who can teach George Orwell's 1984 and escape the obvious conclusion that freedom is a by-product not only of politics but of literature as well? What we read most definitely affects what we are.

Literature matters, say I to my career-oriented student and to my baccalaureate bound student because people do, people like my electronics major and my photography students. Literature offers something of value to the skill-oriented student because any individual student's life is not separable from the conditions and values of literature. All students must be able to relate their

own experiences to a general framework of human experiences, past and present, from Beowulf to "A Supermarket in California" and that means I will try with all my persuasive powers to teach the Oddyssey to a student whose declared major is math or criminal justice.

As a teacher of literature in a community college, I see myself as a "people developer," not exactly like my colleagues whose primary goals are to maintain automobiles better or operate computers. Of course I want my engineering student to learn how to construct reliable ten story parking garages, but I hold myself responsible for helping him or her learn other truths so he may, in addition to building safer office and apartment complexes, achieve a feeling of self-worth and want to continue the human race. An appreciation of the past, as revealed in Huckleberry Finn or Shakespeare's dramas, inevitably affects present attitudes toward the future. I am trying, through literature in the community college curriculum, to raise the quality of life; other courses can help the student raise his annual income. For most of us, both are necessary for happiness.

Many educators would shake their heads at me when I say that the process, the "how to teach" literature in the community college, really doesn't concern me that much. I filter my best scholarship through handbooks like A Guide to Teaching Literature, organized by genres with strategies, teaching aids and additional sources, and geared to the literature courses offered at my college. I share and adapt and try new methods of teaching constantly, as I expect all educators do.

I do feel strongly about one practical point relating to the value of literature in the community college curriculum and that is that in addition to discussing and interpreting literature, the student should be asked to write about the literature. When the student is asked to write an analytical essay, or perhaps an interpretive essay, about a piece of literature, the skills utilized in writing this essay are very like those the student needs in writing for a history course or writing to the editor of a newspaper. The text in literature is the source; a voice in the specific piece of literature may be talking to the student from far away in time and space and a paraphrase is valuable in verifying that the message has been understood by the student. An accurate

understanding of ideas which may be difficult or unacceptable to the student is the necessary basis for a paper of literary analysis. A knowledge of literary terms and the practical command of standard grammar are necessary but what "makes" the paper is the student's interaction with the literature on the level of ideas.

So, what really interests me is the what, the content of the community college curriculum and literature simply must be there. An awareness and sensitivity to every human being's intellectual legacy, an understanding, however little that may be after only one or two semesters, of significant ideas that we human beings can take credit for, that is the content of any literature course and rightly the responsibility of literature teachers. Literature belongs in the community college curriculum because the butterfly exists. The butterfly exists because the caterpillar lived to become itself. Becoming, changing, discovering options, that's the spirit that we all need, regardless of our specific lifestyles and goals. Some students may be able to learn much about life directly, through travel and other "real" experiences; many of our students will be able to place themselves in a space and situation very different from the one they've always known solely through reading literature.

As I was pondering a title for this presentation, I thought of waltzing across the room, singing Aunt Mame's credo, "Open a new window, open a new door," or something more intriguing than my final choice, something like "Dear Student, I'm gonna blow your mind." After all, studying allegories and checking out Miltonian references do have a mind boggling effect. And, Dear Student, I am here for you, to stimulate you and provide you with an education. The opening sentence of an article entitled "Why Writer's Matter" is: "The writer is a creator of options." Literature in the curriculum constantly reminds the student that there are options and options mean hope, individually and collectively. In the same editorial, "The writer narrows the gap between individual and society." My students and I enjoy reading the short story "The Country of the Blind" and we understand that gap. We become aware of another perspective on that theme when we read literature by Albert Camus. More options. I would like to have created for this conference something on
the order of Sir Philip Sidney's "The Defense of Poesy," which we read in British Literature I, because his defense is my credo also:

literature asks of student and teacher "lastingly central questions about art and how it connects with the way we live."

H.G. Wells talked about human history as a race between education and catastrophe. The crucial specific of education is the curriculum. An affirmation of the value of literature in the community college curriculum is my effort to win that race.

The Use of Literature in the Teaching of English as a Second Language

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I vividly remember what one of my colleagues said to me last January when he welcomed me, the new kid on the academic faculty block, to Massachusetts Bay. He said, "So, you teach ESL. Welcome aboard! We all do!"

The above quote may be very accurate. In any case, literature taught in an English as a Second Language course should be taught in a manner appreciably different from that which is taught to native speakers of English.

I will divide my paper into two parts: first will be the statement of goals and structure of an ESL class; second will be a description of the actual teaching of a literary module of my course.

A few years ago at an International Seminar organized by UNESCO to discuss the teaching of modern languages, the following general principles were subscribed to by the majority of the delegates:

1. The approach to the teaching of all foreign languages should be primarily oral.

2. Active methods of teaching should be used as much as possible.

3. The greatest possible use of the foreign language should be made in the classroom.

4. The difficulties of the foreign language in the matter of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar should be carefully graded for presentation.

5. The teaching of a language should enable the students to develop their own skills, as well as provide information about the forms of the language.

The seminar further agreed that the four fundamental skills to be taught are these: understanding, speaking, reading, and writing, in that order.

Classroom situations in the teaching of English as a Second Language in the U.S. vary widely and range from teaching beginners with little or no knowledge of English to intermediates--those with a modicum of control of English--to advanced students enrolled in junior or senior colleges. My discussion will be directed toward the last category, that is, to those non-native speakers of English who are largely proficient in English, at least in comprehending and speaking colloquial English. The basic aim of my ESL course is to remedy English reading and writing skills so that students will be better prepared to pursue their academic careers while at the same time improving their oral and aural skills.

My task of teaching ESL is itself monumental, due largely to the fact that my ESL class is highly heterogeneous; while a third of the students are Hispanic (7), there are large concentrations of Asians, Africans, Middle Easterners, and Europeans, each of whom has different abilities, backgrounds, and unique problems with English. However, unlike the teaching of a foreign language to American students, the ESL teacher in the US does have a unique advantage: students are constantly being bombarded by English since they live entirely in an English-speaking environment--with the exception, of course, of those students who are married or who live with friends or family and who continue to use their native language in the home environment. Another plus to teaching ESL is that the ESL student is, in general, "creme de la creme," and is intellectually more aware of life and the world.

Due to time constraints, I would like to deal with the teaching of the short story to ESL students. Like poetry, the short story is compact; the major themes and ideas as well as plot are usually easy to follow--important for foreign students, who have to spend an inordinate amount of time looking up words. Unlike poetry, where poetic licence provides for the dislocation of normal English

syntax a real problem for non-English speakers, the short story is written in normal syntax. In my class, I have chosen to concentrate on the macabre--a theme which along with humor works well.

One of my students' favorite short stories is a "short-short" entitled "Doctor's Orders" by John F. Suter. The short-short is an American literary innovation whose popularity peaked between 1925 and 1945. It is a demanding literary form, requiring the ingenuity of an O. Henry and the terseness of a La Rochefoucauld. In my opinion, "Doctor's Orders" is one of the most devastatingly short-shorts of all time; seldom has so much evil been compressed into so few words. "Doctor's Orders" has three characters--Jesse, her husband Jeff, and Jesse's doctor. The story takes place in the hospital where Jesse has just given birth to a son who dies shortly after birth. As the story unfolds, we find that Jeff, while appearing to be a caring husband, decides to withhold the fact from Jessie that if she does have another baby she will die. The subplot is that Jeff, an extremely attractive man, did indeed marry Jessie, a homely woman, for her money, which he will inherit after she dies--in childbirth, of course.

My basic approach to teaching "Doctor's Orders" is to have students develop their aural, oral, reading, and writing skills. I start class by giving some background about the author as well as describing on a very basic level historical and literary trends of the period. I then ask students to read a paragraph out loud, stopping them only for serious pronunciation errors. After taking 5-7 minutes to read the story, I review certain phonemes, which have caused the students' errors. After pronunciation drills, I begin vocabulary building by writing 10-15 of the most difficult words from the story on the board and ask the students to explain, in their own words, what part of speech they are and what they mean. From there, we work on homonyms (if any), synonyms, and antonyms of these words. At this point, I choose four or five grammatical features I wish to emphasize; negatives, direct to indirect speech, the past tense of verbs, and the interrogative in the past tense.

Once basic vocabulary and grammar have been exploited, I begin to get to the meat of the text. I ask students to tell, in their own words, who is speaking and what happens in each paragraph.

This approach is key to understanding the plot, since there are many changes in point of view. Once the plot has been unraveled, I ask a series of questions--What type of person is Jeff? What motivates him? What do you think of him? What do you think of Jessie? How is she like or unlike her husband? In short, I treat the four "w" words--who, what, when, where.

The final step is to make the quantum leap from the facts, the plot, to deciding what the facts mean. I ask questions such as--What are the major ideas? What is the author's purpose in writing the story? What is he trying to say? In general, in "Doctor's Orders" students come up with ideas about the themes of appearance versus reality, birth and death, love vs. greed; truth vs. deception; the role of women and the role of men; the concept of marriage. The discussions which follow are quite interesting. Each student is bringing a different cultural heritage and perception of life which, in some cases, differs radically from each other and from our culture.

The procedure which I use fulfills the five guidelines introduced in the introduction: my approach is primarily oral as well as active. Only English is used in the classroom; grammar and vocabulary are carefully graded, beginning with easy words and synonyms up to harder ones. Lastly, students develop their own aural and oral skills by participating in class discussions. Three of the four fundamental skills--understanding, speaking, and reading--have been practiced. The fourth skill, writing, comes into play when the students are asked to write a composition on one of the themes of the story that was discussed in class or to give a character analysis. I also ask students to write ten original sentences using new vocabulary covered in class.

Lastly, I urge the use of slides and field trips to broaden students' cultural background. Having traveled widely abroad and in the United States, I use slides to point out regional differences in the U.S.--climate, geography, architecture, and ethnic mixture. As I mentioned, one of the primary functions of my ESL class is to connect with English 101 and 102 courses as well as with American and British literature classes. Luckily, Boston is steeped in historical and literary tradition. I try to take my classes on field trips to the House of the 7 Gables, the Freedom

Trail, Sturbridge Village, and Walden Pond and to show them U.S. heritage to give them a framework in which to place the literature which they have read or will read.

Using African-American Literature in the Teaching of Writing to Community College Students

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I would like to propose that of all the expressive forms indicative of a society's cultural development, literature is most reflective of a people's historical memories, myths, experiences, and conditions of life. In the anthology Black Voices, Abraham Chapman suggests that Literature as a way of knowing and perceiving probes beyond the conscious, the fully known and the fully thought out, with contrasts and analogy, with imaginative ways of ordering images and values, with metaphors and symbol which suggest and imply the shapes and intimations of things and conditions sensed and known in the psychic subsoil--literature searches and captures human hopes and fears, dreams and nightmares, aspirations and frustrations, desires and resentments, which do not register on the computer cards, statistical surveys, and government reports.

Thus, it is perhaps appropriate to suggest that discovery about the nature of the literary experience should be an essential goal of any ultimately effective writing program, since the process of writing and the process of interpreting literature can be mutually reinforcing activities.

Most teachers of writing today would perhaps agree that reading (of literature in particular) assists students in discovering their own values, tastes, opinions, and ideas; in short, it is a vital operation in the individual's process of creating the "self." The other component part of the creating and

self-discovery process, then, is writing, which is inextricably interwoven with reading, for as Mark Twain noted in "The Art of Authorship," in discussing his own writing, "Whenever we read a sentence and like it, we unconsciously store it away in our model-chamber; and it goes with a myriad of its fellows to the building, brick by brick, of the eventual edifice which we call our style....

Of what importance, then, is the content of the literature emphasized in a writing class? In answer to the question, I would agree with Herman Melville that:

"It is with fiction as with religion; it should present another world, and yet one to which we feel the tie. That other world is the one imagined by the writer, and our interest in it will depend partly on the extent to which it illuminates this world, the one we live in day by day."

Therefore, if literature, through its ordering of images and values, suggests and implies those realities and conditions known in the individual's psychic subsoil, and writing about literature, which reflects a society's myths, experiences, and conditions of life promotes "self creation and discovery," then it is proposed that African-American literature becomes an invaluable tool for the community college writing teacher, who, because of the nature and role of the community college, often finds her student body composed of a great number of black students.

Although it is important to recognize that many writing teachers at the community college already make use of African American literature in teaching their composition classes, it has been, for the most part, grossly under-utilized by English and humanities departments in general as a resource for teaching writing. This is true, for the most part, because the literature of African Americans is seldom seen by our general literary criticism in its full and complete complexity as a literary reality which is organically American, created on American soil in the American language with the same rights to recognition for its American authenticity as the literature created by the descendants of immigrants from England and Europe. At the same time, it is also a distinct and special body of literature, in the sense that the historical memories and myths, experiences and conditions of life of the African-American have been deliberately kept separate and apart, for generations, from those of Euro-Americans.

For the most part, Black students' prior exposure to literature before they enter the community college has been to the traditional mainstream American literature, only. Underlying this tradition is a basic assumption that the Anglo-American literary experience and the development of modern Western tradition in general is the central root of the African-American consciousness and cultural heritage. Unfortunately, we still find that a large number of English majors and students of literature in colleges are not aware that many meaningful literary works have been created by Afro-Americans and are an organic part of the American literary heritage. The general tendency has been to ignore or "play down" the importance of Afro-Americans as creators of cultural values and aesthetic forms in the United States.

While it must be acknowledged that many Black students become effective writers in our classes without the use of Afro-American literature as a writing resource, all too often entering Black freshmen at the community college have not had a satisfying writing history although they come equipped with a considerable amount of experience in "living." And despite many popularly accepted reasons forw hy the skill deficiencies exist, Black students' writing and reading differences and difficulties often reflect conflict with or rejection of the traditional negation of Afro-Americans in literature as well as in educational settings in general.

Writing, it has been pointed out, is more than a mechanism for communicating our thoughts to others; it is also a method of learning,a way of making sense of what we already know, of discovering what we do not yet know, and of finding out what--if we had not begun to write--we might never have known.

In his book The Writer on Writing, Paul Engle points out that, "...The first and most important point about writing is that there is no such thing as material by itself, apart from the way in which a person sees it, feels toward it, and is able to give it organized form and expression in words...."

"Words have users, but as well, users have words," as LeRoi Jones/Imamu Baraka has said, "and it is the users that establish the world's realities." And this, in essence, is a crucial point in

this issue of using Afro-American literature in a writing classroom.

The opinion here is that readings that nurture the self-image and attest to the positive writing achievements of others-like-self are ultimately important for student writers at the community college for the development of long-lasting skills and that this is particularly so in the teaching of writing to Afro-American students.

Afro-American literature allows those students to use the experience they bring with them. Henry James wrote of experience that it is "an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness and catching every airborne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind."

I've suggested here that writing is a process through which one can actively "create" the self, potentially a "self" that is healthy through affirmation of the importance of one's culture's achievement. Frank Smith further elaborates on this view in Comprehension and Learning by noting that "The only effective and meaningful way in which anyone can learn is by attempting to relate new experiences to what he knows already...this continual process or relating of the unfamiliar to what is already known [he calls] making sense of the world...."

The task of education then, it seems, is not to create or even develop the ability to learn, but to understand and respect its nature, thereby facilitating operation. Smith continues, and I concur, that "it is, rather, in the [student's] nature to express and develop innate intellectual capacities, integrating all experience into an intricate view of life that includes hopes and fears, loves and hates, beliefs and expectations, and attitudes towards other people and towards oneself.

No doubt many of us have already observed that the students' thoughts about an author's ideas can form the basis for exploration in an essay. The student first has the opportunity to assess the literary work and his/her reactions. Then s/he has the responsibility of organizing and supporting any thoughts in a convincing

manner for an audience, i.e., the teacher and classmates.

It has been my experience that through the use of Afro-American writings, the teacher can supply the kind of self-reflection through literature that is of primary importance to students' responsible growth toward academic success while at the same time identify critical skill building writing exercises for paragraph and essay development. For example, the poetry of Langston Hughes, particularly the "dream deferred" theme, reflects the everyday person's hopes and failures. The teacher can raise questions related to this theme but familiar to the student in order to evoke response, i.e., beauty standards, television and movie portrayals of Afro-Americans.

Also good for developing writing exercises are discussions of varying and opposing views within a given work (Richard Wright's "Almos' A Man," for instance, is a good example.) Or Alice Walker's "Strong Horse Tea" or "Everyday Use." Both of these works look at family relationships in the changing reality of day to day life in the Afro-American community and the often vicious assaults to personhood through discrimination and racism in American society.

W.E.B. DuBois wrote extensively of the "existential twoness" of the Afro-American in the early 20th century. Very often we will find the recurring themes of self-asserting and duality in the works of Afro-American writers. These works portray to the student concrete responses to the human urge toward self-assertion around which the teacher may want to generate written responses to questions like:

--what is duality/self-assertion for you personally?

--What are examples of its manifestation in your daily life? In sociological, political or historical situations?

--Have you encountered it in literature before? If so how and where?

From Countee Cullen's well-known poem "Heritage" some simple questions for short paragraph development might be the following:

--How do you respond to this poem?

--What are the questions asked by the speaker?

--Does he resolve the dilemma posed by his questions? Where in the poem does this happen?

In written responses, students, both black and white, usually detail their own similar feelings of ambivalence to their heritages from their particular racial and cultural perspective. Or students can be asked to write an explication of approximately 250 words, for example, of the opening paragraph of Ann Petry's "In Darkness and Confusion" and explain how it prepares us for what ultimately happens in the story? Or still dealing with the Harlem Renaissance writers, discuss the idea of dignity and self-worth explored by Arna Bontemps in "A Summer Tragedy."

An excellent work for written responses is Zora Neale Hurston's novel Their Eyes Were Watching God. For example, How does a Black woman of the 1930's decide whom she is going to marry? Does she seek her own fulfillment? And what is that? Should she strive to be like "Miss Ann" and sit on the porch of the big house as the heroine Janie's grandmother says, or should she seek love as a priority? Through written reactions to these types of questions, students can assess Hurston's revelation of Janie's self-affirmation within the context of the Afro-American community.

Other topics for essay writing may focus on the character of Janie, the plot, Hurston's use of the imagery and metaphor of the Afro-American "folk" experience. Feminist themes are clearly evident in the novel and provide a springboard for asking students further questions like... How is Janie's struggle like or unlike your own? Black students are almost always pleased to read of the tenderness among Afro-Americans (which they know to be present but which is seldom written about) that Hurston so vividly depicts. They find it refreshing to examine Janie's revolutionary assertion and the portrayal of positive love between Black men and women.

Richard Wright's Native Son and Uncle Tom's Children both present excellent character studies of the effects of oppression on the individual urge for "self-assertion" through the heroes Bigger

Thomas and Mann. The blindness/invisibility theme utilized by Ralph Ellison (and Richard Wright) poses a wealth of possibilities for short topic papers which allow students to explore the dynamics of the aforementioned "duality" (of the central character) in its literary manifestations.

Ellison's The Invisible Man allows for discussion of numerous examples of the duality of Afro-American existence and its contradictions in American society, and the various episodes of the novel parallel the experiences and situations familiar on some levels to many Black (as well as other) students. The existential theme of the invisible man's effort to assert himself and his humanity can readily lead to a discussion of the existential state of humanity in general and of Afro-Americans in particular.

I want to conclude by re-emphasizing my view that good critical writing, by design, involves reading with perception, not only literal words, but also implied emotions and thoughts which are subtly woven into the literal meaning of a work. It involves not only understanding the works of literature, but responding to them. The literature of Afro-American writers can give students a meaningful ordering and illumination of the Afro-American experience in America; it can show them the creative and imaginative powers and achievements of these men and women while proving psychologically beneficial also. In brief, the literature of Afro-Americans can be an indispensable aid to the writing teacher and a most valuable component of the total humanities curriculum.

ORGANIZING AFRO-AMERICAN READINGS FOR WRITING CLASSES AROUND THEMATIC AREAS

o Individual Worth

"Almos' A Man": Richard Wright
"Exodus": James Baldwin
"White Rat": Gayl Jones

o Self-Knowledge and the Search for One's Identity

The Color Purple: Alice Walker

Their Eyes Were Watching God: Zora Neale Hurston
"The Ballad of Chocolate": Gwendolyn Brooks
"Love: Healer & Destroyer": Gwendolyn Brooks

o Conflict and Reconciliation of the Individual and Society

Invisible Man: Ralph Ellison
"I Have A Dream": Martin Luther King
"The White House": Claude McKay
"We Real Cool": Gwendolyn Brooks
"We Wear the Mask": Paul Laurence Dunbar
"The Man Who Lived Underground": Richard Wright

o Morality and Justice: The Dignity of the Individual

Native Son: Richard Wright
"Southern Mansion": Arna Bontemps
"Yet Do I Marvel": Countee Cullen

o Values: The Making of a Future

"A Poem for Black Hearts": Imamu Amiri Baraka
"Booker T. and W.E.B.": Dudley Randall
"For Malcolm X'': Margaret A. Walker
"If Beale Street Could Talk": James Baldwin

Feminist Criticism and Core Literature Courses: Current Theory and Future Practices

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Summary

For more than two generations, Feminist thinkers have added significant criticism to all aspects of our culture. Feminist literary theory has taken many forms, from the conventional but provocative The Madwoman in the Attic (1979) to the aggressive sexual politics and liberating "ecriture feminine" advocated by French critic Helene Cixous, to the insights provided by American academic literary critics such as Myra Jehlen and Elaine Showalter. Concerns about the nature and power of patriarchal oppression as it occurs in literary anthologies, in curricula, in course descriptions and syllabi, in pedagogy, and in institutional attitudes and politics are as real to teachers in two-year colleges as in universities, if not more so, especially given the heterogeneity and reported conservatism of our students.

The "new" history, "gynocriticism," linguistic/deconstructionist, reader-oriented, socio-political, and rhetorical theories challenge the reign of the New Criticism and extend its pedagogical possibilities. Feminist criticism, by its characteristic eclecticism, promises a healthy "decentering" of the male-centered literature course by raising problems inherent in the texts--or in transactions with the texts--but often "invisible" to the reader/teacher/student. A principal goal of Feminist criticism is to "re-vitalize" the reading of the traditional canon by pointing up such problems through a "dialog" with the texts, to engage those texts, written by men and women, in new ways, by asking "what questions to ask [to] produce the fullest, richest reading." (Jehlen, "Archimedes") By stressing "differences," without marginalizing or co-opting Feminist views, we have the opportunity to explore afresh (a male-centered metaphor) old and new works with

students who often regard their reading as not interesting because of the seeming gray sameness of the canonical literature.

Through examining the highly-anthologized and frequently taught short story by Flannery O'Connor, "Good Country People," we can illustrate how some Feminist ideas and methods enable a "re-viewing" of a work. By raising such questions as the significance of Joy/Hulga's renaming herself (naming is a patriarchal power), her taking a degree in a traditionally male-dominated field, Mrs. Hopewell and Freeman's ways of asserting their power over one another, their men, and their daughters, the story's focus on a female-centered household/farm, the nature of "women-talk," as created (imagined) in the story, etc., we can begin to make problematic in new ways a text which has been discussed in classrooms and in journals in very traditional Formalist terms, or in terms of O'Connor's religious and regional affiliations. In addition, we can see much of the received critical commentary, from the time of reception to the present, in light of Feminist criticism. Such an approach seeks not closure and finality but rather an open, revisionary reading of the text.

The Uses of Film in Teaching the Literature Course

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At Montgomery College, a multi-campus community college in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., declining enrollment in literature courses has been a concern over the last fifteen years. English Department faculty attempt to attract students by "packaging" literature enticingly. One course which has had sufficient enrollment to be offered once a year since its inception in 1977 when I designed it is Film and Literature: The Problems of Adapting Literature to Film. In the Spring 1985 semester, 25 students enrolled, more than ever before.

The obvious attempt to attract students to a literature course by appealing to their interest in movies does not mean that the course lacks seriousness or quality. It means, rather, that students who may sign up for shallow reasons find out that the course is a serious study of literature--and film; for many students are not expecting it to be that either. Some who enroll because of an interest in film leave with a new respect for literature, a new pleasure in reading, and an understanding of the differences between literature and film. The entire semester is designed as an inquiry into the question posed at the beginning of the semester: "Why can't the movie be more like the book?"

To explore the answer to this question, we study the problems entailed in adapting works of literature to film, for since the beginning of their history, literature has been a source of inspiration and screenplays for films. With this problem posed as the starting point for the course, lively discussions usually followed each film screening. In addition, the students are introduced to the terms of literary criticism and of film study and criticism in order to enhance their understanding and to facilitate discussion. By the end of the course, they come to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of each medium and to understand why the movie cannot be and should not be more like the book.

The reading load of the course while not heavy is substantial. A film textbook, Understanding Movies by Louis Gianetti (Prentice-Hall, 1982), provides the necessary background on topics such as photography, mise-en-scene, movement, editing, sound, acting, drama, and literature. It also includes a glossary of film terms and the reading script and shooting script of North by Northwest. I supplement the text with The Art of Film, the series of short instructional films on the camera, the screenwriter, editing, the performer, music and sound distributed by Janus films, and by another instructional film, Basic Film Terms.

The literature assigned consists of short stories, novels, and plays. The short story text, Short Story/Short Film, edited by Fred Marcus (Prentice-Hall, 1977), includes classics such as "The Lottery," "Young Goodman Brown," "The Bet," "The Open Window," "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," and "The Garden Party," which the class discusses before seeing the film adaptation of each. The use of short stories, which ordinarily are adapted to short films, allows for the reading and viewing of a number of works in a short time and therefore provides the class with a common core of works to serve as reference points. In addition, since these short stories are easy to read, the assignments ease the class into the subject, introduce students to a variety of writing styles and literary techniques, and give them experience discussing literature.

Over the years, I have found choosing the novels difficult because of the criteria I have set. I have tried to select works that are good or great, that are neither too long nor too difficult, and have been made into reasonably good films that can be rented within my budget. Usually I select one American and one European novel. Despite the constraints, I have been able to teach quite a few very good books including Tom Jones, Washington Square, The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter, The Grapes of Wrath, All the King's Men, Pride and Prejudice, Wuthering Heights, Heat and Dust, The Stranger, A Death in the Family, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, and, most recently, Cry, The Beloved Country. Sometimes I have selected novellas such as The Turn of the Screw, Beauty and the Beast, Death in Venice, Rashomon, and Tell Me A Riddle, which also have been made into fine films.

Three plays are assigned each semester, one faithful adaptation, one free adaptation, and one adaptation of a Shakespearean drama. In the last few years I have settled on Henry V, because the film is so good, but I have also tried Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello, Romeo and Juliet, and Julius Caesar. Other plays have included The Trojan Women, Iphegenia in Aulis, Oedipus Rex, A Doll's House, Caesar and Cleopatra, Major Barbara, Pygmalion, Androcles and the Lion, The Importance of Being Earnest, The Children's Hour, Long Day's Journey Into Night, The Brig, and Dutchman.

Additional assignments include a midterm examination, a final examination, and two papers. The first paper requires students to write about a short story and its film adaptation, concentrating on such areas as comparing the film with its source, comparing the film with the screenplay, comparing one's own concept of how the adaptation should have been done with the way it was done, or discussing how a short story that has not been filmed might be adapted. The second paper requires students to research a particular problem of adaptation (making the abstract concrete, conveying language, conveying theme, structuring plot, opening up a story for filmic purposes, conveying sound, adapting Shakespearean language, etc.), discuss it, and apply the findings to the books and films on the syllabus.

Although it is difficult to measure outcomes in the teaching of literature, I have found that many students appear to leave the course with an appreciation--and respect--for literature that they lacked when they started. Certainly, they all understand film conventions better. They recognize the differences between the two forms and comprehend why differences are inevitable.

Instructors contemplating offering a similar course at their institutions, should be aware that it will entail certain problems. An appropriate room, preferably a media room, will be needed. Two projectors and a good screen are indispensable. A reasonable budget--at least $1000, unless free films can be obtained from libraries, is required. I never show films on videotape because it is impossible to experience the cinematic qualities of a movie when it is reduced to small screen size at greatly reduced picture quality.) Someone will be needed to determine the availability of the films desired, to order them, to keep track of them, and to

return them. Finally, a decision will have to be made about how to schedule the course, whether it shold be a lecture-lab arrangement or whether it should be one long period. This kind of course cannot be offered without institutional support for everything from budget to equipment to service people.

Teaching Literature by the Composition Method

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Summary

Teaching literature by the composition method uses the concept of the rhetoric of fiction (Booth), treating poetry and fiction as forms of persuasive discourse. The focus is on the way literature works; discovery of its workings leads students to generate their own writing about literature. Perceived effects and devices of literature are organized and focused in the same way that the elements of composition-class persuasive essays are organized and focused, providing a framework useful for inexperienced writers on literature. The theme of a story or poem plays the same role as the thesis of a persuasive essay: both are depicted as a combination of subject plus the writer's attitude toward that subject. Main points are aspects of the work--e.g., plot, images, point of view--and are always dealt with as they relate to theme. Details to support main points are quotes and paraphrases of the particulars of the poem or story, chosen for their elaboration upon the statement made about the element under consideration. Introduction of these literary elements proceeds slowly, one or two per week, so students are not overwhelmed. Assignments develop from concern with one or two aspects of one work, and careful attention to the details that inform that aspect, to comparison/contrast of two works, and a term paper comparing/contrasting a work we have discussed to other, unfamiliar works by the same writer. All written work is preceded by classroom discussion of possible ways to set up a paper, and the creation of a sample piece of writing on the blackboard, based on contributions from class members. Thus, discussion of literature almost always leads directly to writing about literature, and students make progress not only in their abilities to read and discuss works with sensitivity and insight, but in their ability to write about literature, as well.

"Beyond the Parson's Field:
Third World Literature in the Community
College Classroom"

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It is significant that we are meeting in 1985 to discuss the future of literature at the community college. This year commemorates the 40th anniversary of Hiroshima, and the 40th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. It is significant that we are meeting this week, just two days after World Food Day. These events are profoundly important to us as teachers in the humanities, yet we often continue to teach literature as though we were living in a pre-1945 world.

In Hans Christian Anderson's story, "The Ugly Duckling," the mother duck admonishes her children by saying, "Do you imagine this is the whole world? It stretches a long way on the other side of the garden, right into the Parson's Field, but I have never been so far as that!" As English teachers, we are too often guilty of seeing the whole world of literature from an entirely Western perspective, and usually a British or American one at that. We don't venture beyond the Parson's Field.

Current events clearly demonstrate that as Americans we must make more effort to understand our non-Western brothers and sisters. Even our terminology is biased--"non-Western," "Third World."

Alan Cranwell, one of the hostages held in Iran last summer reported, "I was appalled to discover that most of my fellow passengers asked 'Where's that?' when the hijackers announced we were being taken to Beirut." Of a class of 43 sociology students, only two knew where Nicaragua is located. Of 60 composition students, only four admitted they had heard of the term "apartheid." More evidence of our national ignorance about the Third World comes from a recent edition of the Fulbright

newsletter: "Over 90% of U.S. public school teachers have had no meaningful exposure to non-Western cultures." Higher education fares no better--"Less than 1% of all college students in the U.S. are involved in any international studies courses."

We have failed to recognize that the imperatives for the liberal arts are different than they were prior to 1945. Our imperative now is to preserve the fellowship of the world, and we need to educate our students toward that aim. It's a difficult task. The absence of interest in world affairs on the part of our students encourages a "Charlie Brown" attitude on our part. "No problem is so big that you can't run away from it."

We ignore a global education at our own peril. It is our responsibility as educators, and especially educators in the humanities, to help students go beyond their backyards, to relate local issues to global ones, to appreciate cultures different from their own.

Too much of our understanding of the Third World, in particular, is derived from what we see on the nightly news. We have no shortage of information about Lebanon, Nicaragua, and India from political and social scientists, but political discussions tend to emphasize differences, contrasts to Western modes of thought. While literature does illustrate contrast, it also reminds us of experiences we hold in common. Birth and death, love and hate, joy and sorrow: these are events and emotions shared by virtue of our humanity. To have a more holistic understanding of a culture, we must go beyond the empirical data offered by the social sciences. We know that the emotional tug of the poet rather than the statistics of the sociologist gives us greater empathy with our fellow human beings.

We need to reexamine the content of our courses with an eye to the literature we feel is important to an intercultural understanding. This integration should be done at all levels, from elementary school on up, and as a foundation, not in the elementary school as an excuse for mothers to make tacos for the day or in the college curriculum as a kind of exotic elective labeled "Global Studies." International education should be central to the mission of our institutions.

As English teachers we can begin to make a difference by broadening the selection of writers we choose for our classes. Separate courses on Latin American literature or African literature have existed within English departments for years. But we now need a different approach. All of our English department offerings, even the writing classes, need a global perspective. The general introductory literature course is frequently taught as a genre course. There are literally hundreds of examples of works of literature from the Third World that would be accessible to community college students. Some of the newer anthologies include at least a few examples of some poetry and short stories, particularly by Latin American writers. There are also short novels like Nectar in a Sieve, Train to Pakistan, or Chronicle of a Death Foretold that could easily be integrated into the introductory course or a course on the novel. One of my colleagues who taught Chronicle of a Death Foretold last spring found the students more receptive to Marquez's novel than they were to Joyce's Portrait of the Artist. She said, "They were better able to deal with the fantasy than I was." It was also more challenging for her to teach because she couldn't dust off the same yellow lecture notes she used in 1965.

In addition to the introductory course, and the novel course, children's literature is another area which lends itself to a global perspective. Studying the folklore and fairy tales from other cultures not only helps students see the universality of motifs in folk literature, but also enables them to appreciate the distinctive mark that each culture has made on its folk tradition. Connections can be made. Students can appreciate the relationship between African tales of Anansi the Spider and the Joel Chandler Harris folktales of Bre'r Rabbit.

We can also include cross-cultural material in our writing courses. Some ways to accomplish this are to choose essays to study that help students see the link between local issues and global ones or to direct them to research papers involving world issues. Comparisons and parallels can be drawn. One of my colleagues asks freshmen students to read and compare the speeches of Martin Luther King and Albert Lethuli. We can capitalize on their interest in Africa stimulated by the Live Aid concert this past summer, and nudge them along so that they begin to see the

enormity of the problem of world hunger and that charity is an inadequate answer to it.

When we choose to teach literature from the developing nations we do not need to make apologies for it. We are choosing some of the world's great literature and one that is having an increasing influence on American and European writers. For example, this past summer, on July 21, the feature article on the cover of The New York Times Book Review was a review of Under The Banyan Tree, a collection of short stories by the Indian writer R. K. Narayan. The cover story on the "Arts and Entertainment" page of the same issue concerned "Kiss of the Spider Woman," a film based on a novel by the Argentinian Manuel Puig. There are countless other examples of the contributions Third World writers are making to the arts. John Barth has said that it is a Third World writer, Jorge Luis Borges, who is one of the three most influential forces in contemporary American literature. When asked what the novel of the future would be, one New York Times critic replied, "It's already been written; it's called One Hundred Years of Solitude. "The current political drama being played in South Africa has its counterpart in a profoundly moving play--Athol Fugard's "Master Harold and the Boys." When this play was performed in Atlanta, members of the audience could be heard sobbing. They didn't need to be told there was a local-global connection; they felt it. By choosing the selections we use in the classroom as carefully as we would make any other kind of choice of material, Third World literature can help our students appreciate the visions offered by great writers who speak for the world's oppressed people. Certainly an illiterate Nigerian farmer does not produce great poetry, but this is not to say his voice can't be heard. Neruda once said that poets in Latin American carry the corpses of illiterate people on their backs. In our classrooms, of course, we are limited to writers who either write in English or whose works have been translated and published in North America. Even so, our choices are limitless.

Once having made the decision to integrate some of the Third World material, how do we go about doing it? To illustrate, I'd like to share my experiences in teaching some Latin American literature in a general introductory literature course. I usually teach this course as a genre course, and I have tried integrating non-Western literature in two ways--either as a separate module

within the course or included as part of the various genre studies. It works best for me to teach it as a separate module, because of the background that needs to be supplied and the preparation required to "lead" them to the material. I realize that this arrangement runs the risk of having the students perceive the literature as "foreign."

My first step is a brief geography lesson, complete with maps, so that I am confident that the students and I are both beginning with the same idea of where Latin America is. Next, I feel I have to offer some answers to the question "Why should a community college student in Rochester, New York, care about Latin American literature?" We talk about four possible answers to that question.

(1) To get to know a culture that will become increasingly important for us to understand. In 15 years the population of Latin America will exceed 600 million. In 1980, the two biggest cities in the world were Tokyo-Yokahama and Metropolitan New York. In 1990, just five years away, the two biggest will be Mexico City and Sao Paulo, both in Latin America. The Hispanic population in the United States is our largest minority. Indeed, the U. S. is the seventh largest Spanish-speaking nation. In addition, our economic dependence is quite evident. The countries of Latin America comprise our third largest import market; in 20 years it will be the largest. It is also painfully clear that we do not understand our neighbors or their culture now. James Reston wrote in The New York Times in February, 1979 just before President Carter's visit to Mexico, "It is significant that even President Carter's speech writers knew so little about Mexico that they came here to talk to Octavio Paz before preparing the President's remarks to the Mexican Parliament."

(2) To understand Latin American thought. There are exciting visions and ideas in Latin American literature related to a rich heritage, which, in a way, we share. Octavio Paz said, "We are two distinct versions of Western civilization." If we can't all learn the language or can't all visit the country, then studying the literature is the next best way to understand.

(3) To have some knowledge of a major influence in world literature. The United States is behind in its acceptance of translated material, which usually comes to us by way of Europe

where it first gains legitimacy. The innovations of Latin American writers are in the forefront of world literature.

(4) To enjoy the literature. Probably the best reason to study Latin American literature is that it is fun. This is not second rate literature. There are stories and poems as good as those produced by any other culture in the world. The study of Latin American literature is another chance to increase the variety of choices open to us, another chance to make life richer. Indeed, why not study it?

After that brief introduction and discussion, I assign some stories that I feel sure that students will enjoy. I have yet to meet a community college freshman who does not like Edgar Allen Poe. Therefore, the stories selected for the students first taste of Latin American writing were Poe-like, macabre stories. One, "Major Arundel's Hand," concerns a man whose severed hand comes to have a life of its own. Another called "The Thing in the Pillow" involves a young bride whose life is nightly being drained from her, literally by the "thing" in the pillow and symbolically by her husband. After these two stories I introduce some others that have a particular Latin quality to them. After all, my aim is to help the students see what is unique about Latin American literature, as well as what elements it shares with the more traditional forms they are used to. With ten or twelve short stories as background, I feel the students are ready to attempt Gabrielle Garcia Marquez's magnificent novel One Hundred Years of Solitude. One student remarked to me, "That novel is a real trip." And so it is. With enough preparation and enthusiasm on the part of the instructor, the students will read it eagerly. To help them see that the "magic realism" of the novel is tied up with the environment in Latin America we talk about the landscape: butterflies as big as bats, piranha, vivid parrots flying loose. The students can also appreciate the Latin American view of history from reading the novel. History is seen as cyclical, not linear; there is a sense of wheel spinning, which the entire structure of the novel reinforces. As the family history ends, so does the book. We find out that the manuscript being written by one of the characters in the novel is the novel we've been reading. In addition to gaining an insight to a Latin American view of history, the novel explores the byzantine world of Latin American politics as well. Aborted re-

volutions, party politics, the enormous influence of multi-national corporations like United Fruit: all are a part of Marquez's world. Saying that the novel will help them understand Latin American politics is not going to make the student want to rush to read it over spring vacation, but the humor will. It's a very funny book. One character is described as being so flatulent that he causes the flowers to wilt. Another called Remedios the Beauty ascends to heaven while hanging out sheets, but the other characters are concerned only that the new sheets will be missed.

After the novel, we read some Latin American poetry. And, once again, I choose carefully. The three poets I have concentrated on are Mistral, Neruda, and Para. By far the most popular poet with the student is Nicanor Para, a physicist/poet who writes what he calls anti-poetry.

UNPUBLISHED ARTIFACTS

Ultimatum

Either God is everywhere
or absolutely nowhere

Symposium

Cuba, yes,
Yankees, also.

Butterfly

You must pull out its wings
to see how it flies.

U.S.A.

Where liberty is a statue.

I DON'T BELIEVE IN THE PEACEFUL WAY

I don't believe in the violent way
I'd like to believe in something--but I don't
all I can do is
shrug my shoulders
forgive me for being blunt
I don't even believe in the Milky Way

I judge the success of the "foreign" material on the students reponses to it. I would like to share some of those responses with you. "Even though I found it strange, I like it." "I enjoyed reading the Latin American stories because I could relate to them most of the time." "I felt it was a good experience to read the Latin American literature in English class, because otherwise I probably would never have read writings from other cultures." "All in all, it was enjoyable reading. Even at times funny. It was nice to finish a story and say something similar happened to me, or I just know how he or she must feel." "I learned those Latins don't understand women any more than I do."

Our students are not the only benefactors when we choose to read literature from the Third World in our classes. Here's a chance for real faculty development. Most community college literature teachers are middle aged; we've been teaching for 15 or 20 or more years. To read literature that offers a perspective that is non-Western, that differs from the usual British and American tradition is refreshing and exciting. Thomas Colchie, who is a translator and agent for over 20 Latin American authors, said, "I'm personally a little tired of reading about the problems of life in suburban Connecticut." We have the opportunity to grow professionally and intellectually and become students ourselves, while at the same time being stimulated by the visions of some truly great writers. When we're willing to risk going beyond the Parson's Field, we help our students and each other understand the larger world in which we live.

"Once More Unto The Breach, Dear Friends": Charging an Honors Program

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Summary

The following techniques were successfully used in an Honors English 102 (English Composition and Literature) course and greatly assisted students in developing their talents for individual and group work.

The Frederick Community College English 102 course emphasizes a genre approach to the study of literature, covering drama, the short story and poetry. For drama we had emphasized tragedy from Sophocles, through Shakespeare, to Ibsen. Students were also asked to select from two choices for individual research: either to read another work by a playwright already covered or to find another tragedy from the time periods covered. In either case each student reported to the class on the following areas: evolving some ideas of the playwright's style, discussing the play's theme, and finding whether or not there might be some events in the playwright's background or in the time period in which he lived to illuminate our understanding of the development of such themes.

For the short story genre, students worked in pairs on sets of stories grouped together for specific reasons, i.e., similarities in style, theme, use of symbolism, etc. Everyone in class had read all the stories, but each pair of students led class discussion in the two specific stories they chose. For example, one set of students led the discussion of chrysanthemums as symbols of marriage in D.H.Lawrence's "The Odor of Chrysanthemums" and John Steinbeck's "Chrysanthemums." Another pair of students discussed childhood crisis in an adult world, with reference to Joyce's "Araby" and O'Connor's "First Confession."

For our final genre, poetry, students were assigned to work in groups of three or four on specific themes such as Problems in

Human Relationships, The Faces of Love, Man vs. Woman, Death. Each group had about six poems to study under the general theme. They divided up the work of briefly researching writers' lives and read the poems on their own. Then they started their group work by taking turns reading the poems aloud to each other and sharing ideas about what each poem might mean. All groups had been given a list of poetic terms to look up in a Handbook to Literature, so their discussions centered on physical characteristics and techniques as well as content. Each member of the group shared in leading class discussion on the category of poems assigned.

Evaluation of the class was, without exception, very high. Although the instructor was given top marks, the real measure of student satisfaction came from their own level of participation. The combination of working singly, in pairs, and in small groups varied the experience of each new genre. And, finally, students had been challenged to the maximum in the development and sharing of ideas. A measure of the course's success came from one student who said, "You know, I've never done well in English before and was always bored listening to lectures. After this class, I realize how exciting literature can be and have decided to make English my major."

Using Cross-Cultural/Ethnic Literature to Teach Writing to Non-Traditional College Students

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Two summers ago I had the honor and good fortune to have been selected from among quite a few applicants to participate with twenty-four others in the Boston Writing Project, part of the National Writing Project. My main reason for wanting to participate was purely selfish--I'd been teaching English for thirteen years and was no longer sure that I could, indeed, write; after all, few of my students ever seemed to show the kinds of improvements I expected. (To be sure, there were always those promising writers who kept me constantly coming back to the profession in the hopes that I could, at least, inspire others). Dr. Joseph Check, Director of the Boston Writing Project at the University of Massachusetts, Boston Campus, along with his wonderful coordinator provided all the participants a notebook full of articles on the teaching of writing and the processes involved in writing. One article, "Literacy in 30 Hours," by Cynthia Brown, had a profound impact on all of us and, without a doubt, drastically altered the way I'd been teaching writing and literature. In her article, Ms. Brown chronicled how Paulo Friere taught totally illiterate, adult Brazilians to read in thirty hours. While I won't go into detail about his methods, I will simply restate his philosophy, a philosophy that I'd come to understand by the time I was six years old. During those six years I had seen the man next door ridiculed by children and adults alike because he made X's where his name should have been; I hsd witnessed the insults my mother and aunts had received while they served dinners at "fancy white folks'" parties; and I had seen my grammar-school educated father who could outthink, out-problem solve and out-repair any of the "college boy" auto mechanics for whom he worked, passed over time and time again. And when I was twelve years old I had been paid twelve dollars a week to read to the lady next door. But I had neglected to incorporate the philosophy in any course outside of the Black Literature courses I taught part-time at Northeastern University. Simply stated, Paulo Friere's philosophy is that learning to read is a

political act, a step toward participation as a citizen. It took absolutely no reflection for me to agree with him. In fact, I thought, the philosophy could be expanded and for the first two weeks of class, in every class I write the following statement on the board:

> Learning to read with understanding, to write understandably, to think critically, and to speak well are decidedly political acts. A nonliterate person, though perhaps powerful in a nonliterate sub-culture, is only marginal in a dominant culture. A nonliterate or the government defined functionally illiterate is doomed to a life of powerless non-existence. S/he cannot adequately fill out job applications, cannot determine what is in a lease or a contract, has no access to critical information, has no protection against fraud, has unequal or no participation as a citizen, and most certainly cannot compete well in academia.

For the first two weeks, without directly referring to the statement, I invite my students, as I now do you, to review world history and to realize that it is no accident that education, in whole or in part, has always been denied the masses, either by law or practice; that women of almost every culture (perhaps with the exception of Black Americans, [which is another social, economic, political and historical, pandora's box]) have been the last and the least educated; that in the 1960's Spiro T. Agnew delivered a speech where he was purported to have said that education must go back to the aristocracy; that in the 1980's we have a President who seemingly worships the death of minds and bodies rather than the growth of human beings.

And with that brief world overview, I remind you that as educators we must realize that how people exercise their ability to read, to write, to think, and to speak reflect in part our own political attitudes. If non-readers learn to read both by writing and reading their own words and opinions (or those of people like themselves), then they can learn that their perceptions of reality are valid to others and can influence even those in authority. Students, particularly those we call non-traditional, (and here I

include Hispanics, Blacks, older, returning females, learning disabled and ESL, among others), will learn to read and write if these are not part of a cultural imposition on them. If teachers require students to learn the words and ideas donated by those in power, then the learners must accept that experience as more valid than their own--or they decide not to learn to read and write.

These are the main reasons that I teach all literature, classic as well as modern, "Mainstream" as well as cross-cultural, in terms of "cross-culturalism," but never in terms of minority literature. And, I do not teach writing without teaching reading, because for me these are twin activities. It does not matter whether an instructor believes that writing is a linear or circular process, a process or a skill or that literature is art for art's sake. What does matter is that students be encouraged to read more widely in search of ideas to strengthen their writing, that readings be analyzed and understood within their philosophical, historical, economic, psychological, sociological and their political contexts.

What matters is that our non-traditional students come to us perhaps not so much with unique problems, but certainly with exaggerated ones: poor self-image, low morale, hostility toward school, lack of motivation, cultural differences that often interfere with the development and improvement of reading and writing (and by extension with the development and improvement of speaking and critical thinking). Not only is it up to the instructor to help the student understand and perhaps minimize these problems, but also to realize that reading and writing abilities do not automatically reflect intelligence, that the use of non-standard English, contrary to popular belief, causes little interference in reading comprehension, that the diagnosis and measurement of reading and writing abilities are often invalid as many of the instruments used are long lists of nonsense words or literature that does not speak to the students' culture or were programs that lasted no longer than eight weeks and provided little or no follow-up information.

Since a student's view of herself can often interfere with academic success, the teaching of ethnic or cross-cultural literature or the teaching of literature with an ethnic approach offers a unique and welcomed change for most of our so-called non-tradition-

al students. It offers all students the opportunity to read and write about experiences that are of value to the self and the belief that writing becomes an intuitive activity instead of a constant manipulation of language and an agonizing birth.

The cross-cultural or ethnic approach to teaching writing through reading promotes critical thinking as well, since students, often for the first time, meet characters, find conflicts, see images and symbols similar to those that exist in their everyday, individual realities. After all, the real problems in the real world, as well as in academia, lie in understanding ourselves, our world, and our relationship to it. An ethnic approach to teaching reading and writing provides a more broadened, albeit political, context of "other" through which we define ourselves past, present, and future. This kind of approach, I think, promotes a variety of thought processes--information gathering, reflection, perception, appreciation, imagination, tolerance, and assimilation.

Further, this approach to teaching reading and writing can act as a strong stimulus to which students may react first verbally and then in writing and challenge the heretofore, unquestioned perceptions that both non-traditional and traditional students have been forced to accept as true. Students are offered a unique chance to become critically conscious of their situations, and when that occurs, enormous energy is available and the student is personally encouraged and challenged to take action against the restraints on their lives in an effort to transform their situation. At this point both non-traditional and traditional students find that education can be liberating rather than domesticating, that as students they can be truly critical instead of accepting things as they are or as others have presented them.

While I have no statistics, I know that the use of these readings and my approach to "mainstream" literature allow students to feel they can analyze literary works beyond the customary use of literary language and in so doing they do become better writers, particularly in content. The by-product of all this is that oftentimes there exists a new respect for each other and the class, and there is renewed pride in their verbal and written responses. Students realize, finally, that the key to reading with understanding, writing understandably, thinking critically, and speaking well is not language change, but language growth. For as sociologists have

pointed out, each cultural or ethnic group must define itself, must have its own spokesperson selected from the group by the group, for each group is captured within its own set of experiences and fashioned and molded by the rewards and punishments of society in its relation to the various subgroups within it.

Through cross-cultural/ethnic literature, the fearful writer can be shown the possibilities of expression s/he may not have realized before while at the same time help to eliminate prejudices about reading and writing which have arisen because of unsuccessful literary experiences in the past. These models show students what writers from their own culture have dared to do, that all writing is a process, that they cannot only imitate style, but that they can bend it, mold it, stretch it until it becomes their unique style--and that non-verbal communication, cliches, slang, and jargon can be effectively, appropriately and creatively used. But most importantly, these readings, or my suggested approach to "mainstream" readings, can introduce them to expressions, experiences, and reflections more comprehensive than their own so that reading reinforces learning about writing and is relative to other disciplines such as psychology history, political science, theology, and philosophy.

Unfortunately, it is generally not until well into the semester (for me, this is usually the eleventh or twelfth week) that students' writing becomes adequately focused and detailed and somewhat grammatically correct (at which time I ask them to respond to the quote). This often leaves only three or four weeks, much of which is devoted to review for final exams or students taking off to study what they've not studied or comprehended before, and just as you know you've taught them and they've understood, they go off for a long break or on to other classes where often they are told that they live in a world that requires math and technological skills rather than words or questioning thoughts. The semester itself does not offer enough opportunity to write, especially if there is no writing across the curriculum. Thus, an English instructor can only hope that the student will find the opportunity to use and perfect what s/he has just learned before someone else convinces her that "those silly things" are done only for those "crazy English teachers."

The Word Must Fit the Need: Using Video and Film To Teach Literature in the Community College

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By now it is obvious to every parent and teacher that American young people have been profoundly influenced by television and film; the average 18 year old has watched 100,000 hours of television in that short life and those under thirty make up the bulk of the movie-going populace. While we slept, a great change occurred, and there is more to come. Some authorities predict that the current video craze has only begun, that every neighborhood will have several video stores renting dozens of films,(mostly poor to awful by any valid critical standard) seven days a week, twelve hours a day, some even providing free popcorn, all offering special rates for multiple rental of video tapes. And, as one might imagine, all this video watching hasn't done much for serious reading, as a conversation with a local librarian quickly reveals. The young, steeped in Harlequin romances, have little use for or have never heard of Pride and Prejudice.

In 1978 when I began to teach at Loop College we offered and fully registered (upwards of thirty students per class) the full spectrum of literature classes--period, genre, theme--several dozen each year. Students arrived from high school to be challenged by the great works, and they, the counseling department and, certainly, English teachers regarded such study as essential for a literate human. No more. In 1985 we struggle to fill four or five literature classes per semester at Loop; other colleges fare even worse. What to do?

Obviously, the many reasons for this shift away from the study of serious literature require a careful examination to be understood, but while we are waiting to figure out what happened, I propose we use one part of the problem, video and film, as part of the solution. I want to describe the way in which I use both film and video to recruit students for literature classes and keep them

interested once I have them. Moreover, in the case of teaching all the forms of drama I would insist that using video and film is no mere concession to public taste but the most reasonable and effective approach.

At Loop I teach both drama and Shakespeare and, with intense recruiting, am able to offer drama in the fall semester, Shakespeare, in the spring. And, while it is true that the average student is intimidated by Shakespeare, once they hear that they will be able to see his plays on video and film, they are willing to consider taking the course. Then I show a half hour synopsis of the Burton-Taylor Taming of the Shrew, a lively and visually beautiful version produced by Franco Zeffirelli. (This film, produced by Learning Corporation of America, is titled "Man and Woman" and is available from the Chicago Public Library.) Students love it and engage in lively discussion of its many ambiguities; at the end of the discussion I point out how much they understood, how much they enjoyed, how little the language troubled them. I describe several of Shakespeare's comedies, As You Like It, for one, and point out how the poet presents, directly and by implication, a clear view of how, when, and why romance works, suggesting they might find there some answers to their own love dilemmas. Such an approach produces laughter and good feeling, but they do sign up, and they do learn to know and love some of the world's greatest plays.

For nearly every session in both drama and Shakespeare I use either film or videotaped versions of the plays we consider. These may be procured in a number of ways at no great expense in time or money to the teacher; many "classics" are available in libraries and are regularly loaned to schools. In addition, I take all these classes to see whatever plays are being produced locally that fit our needs and focus. Needless to say, such exposure provides matter for endless and lively discussion, and, in particular, assists the students in designing a topic for the critical paper they must write. One of my primary purposes is to assist each student in developing a conscious and articulated theory whereby they can continue to critique video and film for the rest of their lives--I hope to help them see more clearly and with more pleasure.

To this end, one the most interesting segments of a literature course involves examining as many different versions of a work as

possible, reading the text, seeing the film and the play, and even comparing the work of different actors and directors, particularly those separated in time. I have also used videos made of actors as they develop their approach to a play in concert with the director in which they all discuss their theories about acting and character development as they prepare to present the full play. Then we see the full version of that work and, on one occasion, we were able to see yet another live performance of the same play produced by a local Chicago theater; as it happened, the students preferred the video version and were articulate in explaining their reasons, reasons echoed by a local critic who felt that, while the production was a noble effort and had achieved some good effect, problems in casting limited its success. The students learned more about the intricacies of theater in that time than in endless reading of texts.

Still, for each course the students must use the selected text, and most find it helpful to follow along as we watch the video in class. They also make copious use of background information including history, biography, cultural contexts, and the like, all of which enrich their understanding of the works as well as teaching them quite a bit of history, literary and otherwise. Of course, it's not a new idea to work back from a film to the reading of a book, and with the continuing appearance of the classics on the PBS series "Great Performances," this process gets easier all the time. However, using filmed versions of the classics in the classroom along with the text permits a rich exploration of the work of art otherwise not as accessible to today's students.

While the video or film is running, we analyze as we go along, stopping the film, rewinding, reviewing as often as need be to get the subtitles of particular scenes, leaving time for questions to solve confusion on the spot. Recently I took my drama class to see the Stratford Theater production of King Lear appearing in Chicago. We all enjoyed the play--how could we not, a great group, a great play, but there were problems, and out of these difficulties the students were able to draw a deeper awareness of the problems of producing plays faithful to the text, a scholarly approach normally first encountered by English majors in graduate school. During the class following our attendance at the play, we watched the video version of the Olivier Lear, and what a difference. In the discussion these two productions produced, students learned more

about theater and more about Lear than I had thought could be done in a single class session (obviously, it is well to schedule such classes once a week for three or four hours if the logistics of a given school permit.)

But it is not only in theater classes that this approach is useful. I use video and film in all my literature classes, including the introductory course, fiction, and women's literature. There are wonderful films of a wide variety of short stories available (I especially like "Paul's Case") that lend themselves in the same way. Recently I used a wonderful version of To The Lighthouse to help the women's lit students read A Room of One's Own, easily; this marvelous manifesto by Virginia Woolf, beautiful but difficult, essential reading in such a course but inaccessible to many community college students in the range of vocabulary and allusions, should not be missed. The film helps students to make a beginning with Woolf as they find themselves filled with empathy and compassion for the characters in To The Lighthouse, evocative of her life, and that compassion pulls them into the more difficult and rigorous intellectual work demanded by A Room of One's Own.

I could say much more about the detail, the logistics, the effects of using video and film in the literature class room, but I can't say anything more powerful than it works. In these days of scant literary offerings, these literature classes fill and the students keep coming, keep sending their friends, keep reappearing after a semester or two of work on "requirements" to take yet another literature course, "something to keep me sane in all this other," said one. And I am having a wonderful time, as I reread and reteach all my favorites and get to look at wonderful filmed versions of them as well. The only limits on what might be done in this kind are the imaginations and technical resources of the personnel involved; there are no limits to the payoff.

Many of the students exposed to literature in this way will become more avid readers of serious literature, constant theater goers, insightful critics, and that's reason enough. But there are many more benefits, including the resuscitation of our literature offerings and the development of a more general awareness of the importance of literary study to a proper education. Indeed, the continuing crisis in the teaching of composition continues, in part, because the non-writers don't read. No one can learn to

write well without serious study of the great literature of one's own language, and hardly anyone will want to study that literature without having learned to love it, without feeling how great a thing it is to read a favorite book. For these and may other reasons yet to appear, teaching literature with video and film is a good thing to do.

Expectation and Reality: Teaching Literature in the Rural Community College

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MCCC lies approximately 70 miles northwest of Memphis, Tennessee, situated in Blytheville, Arkansas, population 24,314. It serves a rural county of 60,000 people who are spread over a large farming area, and receives a number of out-of-state enrollees, since Blytheville is only seven miles from the Missouri state line. MCCC has received national attention for its experimental use of solar energy as the school's primary power source. In the bleak, flat farmland surrounding it, the college stands out startlingly, often generating comment from casual observers passing through town.

Inside, the college is clean and relatively quiet, considering the 1217 students enrolled. I felt fortunate to be teaching here for my first college position, especially since I had been hired to teach world literature as well as freshman composition. Many of my friends from graduate school had jobs relegating them to writing labs (until they had more experience) or limiting their teaching to freshman composition. And here I was, allowed to teach my favorite works of literature! I expected my first semester to be difficult, but I had high hopes for my literature classes. I did not expect that my students would love literature instantly, but I did assume they would have adequate reading skills and a willingness to read the assignments; from there, my enthusiasm and knowledge would lead them to love and appreciate literature.

On the first day of classes, as they arrived with the heavy anthologies we read from, I understood my students' worried air; after all, they were not familiar with me or the course. After three weeks, however, I was slightly confused by their growing restlessness, and by mid-term, I was close to despair. The students were apathetic toward the course (although there were a few who had a belligerent air), and I had definite qualms,

strengthened by poor responses on reading quizzes, that they were even reading the assignments at all.

I began to have serious doubts about my ability to teach and my students' abilities to learn. Depressed over my failure, I visited the counselor's office to relieve my tensions by complaining loudly to a friendly colleague. He suggested I consult my students' records to get an indication of their educational backgrounds. I did, and what I found was truly enlightening. The most important information revealed to me that in one of my classes, where ages ranged from twenty-two to fifty-three, the majority of my students had from fourth to ninth-grade reading levels. I had understood that these students would not be familiar with literary terminology, nor with the works we would be studying, but the reading scores stunned me. I was so discouraged that I viewed it as useless to teach world literature to students who read so poorly that they must have trouble comprehending the newspaper. To make matters worse, my disillusionment became visible. I continued with the assignments outlined in my original syllabus, and when my students failed the exams because they had not read the material, I mechanically marked F's on their papers without comment. I lectured constantly because no one had read enough to answer any of the questions I used to begin class discussions. Attendance dwindled, and the few who continued to come sat in class writing furiously, trying to copy every word I said, hoping, I suppose, that they might pass the course on their lecture notes. They thought I was unfair to them (as I was) because I had expected them to be intellectually prepared for literature. My enthusiasm had vanished, and my defense was a pseudo-professional attitude that only made me appear cold, aloof, and impossible to please.

I finished that semester irritable, depressed, and embarrassed, resolving that my second term would not resemble the first one. I discussed the problems I had experienced with colleagues, counselors, and even some students. I also reviewed the students' records to see if I had missed any important information. Slowly, I began to piece together a picture of the MCCC student body, and to realize the errors I had unknowingly committed.

I discovered that many of my students had not been motivated to read the assignments, not only because of poor reading skills, but

also because of a lack of or negative experiences with literature in junior high and high schools.

Several of my students had graduated from small rural schools where exposure to art or ideas was minimal. Studying literature often meant committing poems to memory in order to recite before the class. (While a few students had not minded this singular approach to literature, many remembered it as a frightening ordeal.) At home, parents, who had attended the same rural schools and received the same educations, seldom read. They did not often find committing poems to memory useful around a farm, so they no longer had a use for poetry. Television was the favored mode of entertainment, and since literature was not necessary for employment, it was considered to be unimportant.

Perhaps because they had read so little, my students had regarded the writings from ancient and foreign cultures as irrelevant to their own lives, and therefore, as uninteresting or subversive. My students came from families who were hard-working and who held no-nonsense attitudes toward life. Most had never been considered college material before, and they were attending college now to obtain marketable skills. Although literature was required for graduation, they felt it was not necessary for a satisfying life. They viewed literature as useless and sometimes suspicious information, instead of a means to examine the world around them. One of the realities I had overlooked in small rural communities in Arkansas was religion. I had separated literature and religion easily when the time came to study The Vedas, The Koran, and various books from the Hebrew Bible. I had not realized that my students would not. Their strong religious convictions made them consider approaching the Biblical selections from a literary perspective irreverent. They had found my enthusiasm regarding The Vedas and The Koran disquieting since they viewed both works as opposing Christianity.

I had also made what must be a fairly common mistake of first year teachers. I saw myself as the focal point of the classroom. I asked the questions I thought were important while ignoring my students'; I considered my comments or insights more important than theirs. Armed with my book and chalk, I proceeded to be a one-man show for the class. I either talked or wrote on the chalkboard. I tried to begin discussions, but we discussed only if the students

could answer my questions. I had looked upon my students as a group of people with minds devoid of previous experience, feelings, opinions, and knowledge. I had assumed I would fill these minds with my perceptions of life and literature, and my feelings toward each, as easily as pouring out a glass of water. I had used what Nancy Fisher called the "vaccination method" of teaching literature: I assumed that no one would ever read anything again, so I assigned everything. As a result, my students had read nothing, and I had certainly taught nothing.

The second semester of teaching literature I regained my enthusiasm and held the interest of most of my students by making literature the focus of the course. I did this by devising methods that alleviated my students' frustrations, caused often by poor reading skills and a lack of previous literary knowledge, and mine, caused by unrealistic expectations. These methods have helped me for four years, and hopefully will aid in overcoming the difficulties other first year teachers and their students experience.

First, I found that initially defining figurative terms and pointing out figurative language in everyday speech, popular songs, television programs, and movies prepare the students to examine language comfortably at different levels of meaning. The instructor should spend the first two weeks of school explaining the uses of figurative language before giving any reading assignments. Simile, metaphor, symbol, allusion, imagery, paradox, hyperbole, and understatement are among the terms I define. More time should be spent discussing examples of metaphor and symbol than anything else, since these concepts are the two most difficult for students to comprehend, and since the lack of comprehension of these has often led them to become disgusted with poetry, and to view it as silly and often meaningless. It is important to define and discuss instead of to define and lecture. Students need the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of these concepts, and by doing so in class discussion all the students benefit. There is the urge to feel that two weeks have been "wasted," but it is important to remember that an underlying comprehension of figurative language is the main tool students require to enjoy reading and studying literature in the future.

Secondly, I discovered that limiting outside reading

assignments to a minimum and relying on oral presentation of poetry and plays assure that all students, even those with poor academic skills, experience great works of literature. The initial hurdle to get over is the idea that the class has to cover as much material as possible. Quality, not quantity, applies strongly here. Reading assignments should proceed at a comfortable and realistic pace for the students. The point is to read thoroughly in order to understand and thus to appreciate each selection. Students will not like everything the class reads; however, they should be basing their preferences on a knowledge of the works, not their difficulty they have for them.

Poetry, of course, is rhythmic, musical, and meant to be read aloud. It should be read aloud in class regularly by students. The instructor can stress the desirability of reading a poem several times, and then do so in class by having several students take turns reading the same poem aloud.

Oral presentation of plays results in one definite plus; the instructor can be certain that all attending class that session will have read the assignment. Reading plays aloud in class by assigning parts to students is an excellent way to retain the class's attention, cover the material, and open class discussion. Surprisingly enough, when the time comes to assign parts, even the poorest readers will eagerly volunteer to read a part aloud. Rarely does anyone refuse to read. The instructor should keep the following thoughts in mind when the class reads plays aloud:

a. Everyone should have a chance to read. Main characters' lines should be given to another student after thirty minutes of reading. The students who are reading pay the closest attention to the play, so parts should be changed often enough that no one goes for long without one.

b. Poor readers, who often are very eager to read despite their long pauses and mispronounciations, should be given small parts to read so that their desire to participate is satisfied without the other students becoming impatient or bored.

c. The instructor will have to edit. Class time does not allow every word of a play to be read; instructors should have students read action-and information-packed scenes aloud and should explain verbally those scenes that are long on dialogue.

d. The class will read fewer plays, but it is guaranteed that they will enjoy and understand those they have read aloud. Again, quality must prevail over quantity.

For a change of pace, videotapes provide the students with the opportunity to experience the play as it was meant to be. Presentations on videotape also allow the students to watch a performance while simultaneously reading it in their books. The instructor has the luxury of stopping the players in mid-performance to allow for students' questions and for discussion. The added meaning movement gives words cannot be undervalued. Students' difficulties comprehending literally the dialogue in Shakespeare's Hamlet, for example, are reduced greatly by their viewing the play as they read.

Thirdly, imparting information through discussion rather than lecture enables the teacher to become familiar with students' diverse backgrounds and attitudes, allowing them to integrate smoothly ideas and philosophies that contrast greatly with their own. By relying on students' impressions, comments, and criticism to explore literature, the instructor becomes approachable without losing professionalism. If the instructor has followed the previously mentioned strategies it is unlikely that much time will be spent lecturing, since students will already be actively participating in class discussion. The instructor should not underestimate what he can learn from students, not only about the students themselves, their attitudes and preferences, but also from their comments and insights on the literature as viewed from a fresh perspective. All students will regard what they read from the vantage points of their upbringings, previous educations and religious backgrounds. Their insights and interpretations are certainly no less valid for being different, but, in fact, can add much to the class.

The most immediate advantages of these strategies are improvements in class attendance, comprehension, exam scores, and students' attitudes. But by having the opportunity to experience literature despite their limited reading abilities, lack of previous exposure to art and ideas, and negative attitudes, students are able to realize that literature is a rich and vital part of life available to everyone. With this realization may come the motivation to continue to read and appreciate literature long after the course is over.

Literature -- an Invaluable Aid in Teaching Reading Comprehension Skills to Remedial or Developmental Level Community College Students

by Loisjean Komal and Carlene Wingfield
Malcolm X College, City Colleges of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Using literature to teach remedial and developmental skills can increase the motivation, interest, and achievement of many community college students, prevent "professor burn-out," and lower the cost of a course to the student.

For the past several years, we have used literature to teach basic comprehension skills to students enrolled in either remedial or developmental level reading courses at Malcolm X College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago. When literature is used, the students are given an opportunity to read an entire literary work--which often times is a first for many remedial or developmental level students. The students become highly motivated and interested in their assignments. Some students actually learn faster and/or better when literature is used rather than a traditional skill oriented textbook. Students can quickly grasp literal comprehension skills and then move rapidly on to higher level skills such as inference, application, and evaluation of concepts.

Using literature to teach remedial-developmental skills can also help to deter teacher "burn-out" or boredom. The professor is able to share classical literature as well as contemporary favorites with the students. The professor can also stimulate his/her creativity in teaching and develop innovative lessons about the literary work being read. The teaching-learning process becomes a more stimulating experience for both teacher and student.

Using a novel, short story, poem, or play to teach remedial-developmental skills can be less costly for the students. With cuts in financial aid grants and the rise in economically disadvantaged community college students, monetary considerations have become an important factor in the teaching-learning process.

We have developed comprehension guides for works by various authors including Claude Brown, Lorraine Hansberry, Gloria Naylor, Langston Hughes, Franz Kafka, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker. We have found that using literature also enhances the learning process for students who are enrolled in "regular college level" courses. We also found that the same novel, short story, play, or poem can be used at all levels of the curriculum. Readability level is not a major factor.

Of course, using literature rather than a textbook does require additional preparation time, more input, and greater involvement on the part of the professor. The professor must develop comprehension questions and tests, construct lesson plans, and prepare additional learning activities that are not necessary when using a textbook. Commercial texts are certainly easier for the professor to use than literature. And some students do learn well with rote methods. However, we have found that the results in terms of student motivation and progress are well worth the extra time and effort.

The following is our "Recipe for Teaching A Raisin in The Sun," an award winning play by Lorraine Hansberry.

Loisjean Komal's and Carlene Wingfield's

RECIPE FOR

Teaching Lorraine Hansberry's Play

A RAISIN IN THE SUN

Preparation Time: about 5 hours
Instructional Time: about 8 weeks

Ingredients

2 Reading 099 classes
40+ Students
40+ copies of A Raisin in The Sun, Lorraine Hansberry, Signet Book, New American Library, 1959
40+ small boxes of raisins
7 different sets of comprehensive questions
2 quizzes

1 examination
1 filmstrip, The Life of Lorraine Hansberry, Brunswick Productions
1 film, A Raisin In The Sun, Columbia Pictures
1 recording, A Raisin In The Sun, Caedmon Records
1 bus tour of selected neighborhoods (optional)
10+ neighborhood maps, pamphlets or slides

Procedure

EAT raisins while viewing the filmstrip on Lorraine Hansberry's life. Preview play with students and read Langston Hughes poem at the beginning of the play -- Montage of A Dream Deferred. Discuss the relationship between "raisins" and "dreams that dry up like a raisin in the sun".

MATCH students between each class as "Pen Pals." Have the students write one letter per week to their pen pal about their understanding of or opinion about the events that occur in the play.

BLEND oral reading, choral reading, silent reading, and listening of recording to cover each scene of the play. Read one scene per week.

STIR IN one set of comprehension questions about the scene read as homework. One quizz after reading Act 1 - Scene 1 through Act 2 - Scene 1. Another quizz after reading Act 2 - Scene 2 through Act 3.

TOSS with a tour of selected neighborhoods and/or a viewing of the movie version of the play. Have the students prepare a scrap book about their present neighborhood and their dream neighborhood.

COVER WITH an examination on the entire play.

Results

Knowledgeable, Motivated, Interested Students. A Happy Successful Teacher.

*The cost of a bus tour of Chicago may be obtained from payment by students in the class, grants from the Office of Student Support

Services at your local campus, or a combination of both. During the Fall Term, the CTA Cultural Tour Bus may be used.

A Student's Response to
A RAISIN IN THE SUN

by

Dorothy Johnson - Student, Malcolm X College

Thank you so much for being so kind.
You made me see where I used to be blind.

Your great words of inspiration
Have all been taken into consideration.
From my vocabulary book to Raisin In The Sun,
I have never left my homework undone.

You'll never know all that you have done.
But, let me tell you a victory is won.
People like you make the world go round,
Make you smile, when you wanna frown.

I took up a major which could scar me for life.
I can't stand the pain, the grief, and the strife.

I had an idea or should I say dream.
It was deferred and so hard it seemed.
I had almost renounced the dream I had
Because a sagging dream is very sad.

Our children are the future of tomorrow
And without our support there will only be sorrow.

In other words what I'm trying to say is that
A very good professor would be hard to Repay.
It seems to me, that you really do care.
All that we needed, you were willing to share.

How I thank you words can't express
But, one thing for sure I'll try my best
To show appreciation in all I do.
And, I'll always be courteous to you.
You helped me to make up my mind.
Just like I said you're one of a kind!

My major will change to Theatre now.
You can't fail, if you don't try!
I don't know how but,
I will make it through bye and bye.
Thanks! Wish me luck.
For one day who knows, I may have big bucks.

62

Teaching the Bible as Literature

Robert R. Lawrence
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Danville, Kentucky

Back in the early 1970s when I was teaching in a church related liberal arts college on Staten Island, New York, while doing my graduate work, the college devised a Freshman Honors Program in which the students could take their history of civilization, world literature, and religion and philosophy requirements in one block of nine hours each for two semesters. The three instructors would be in the classroom with the students in a round-table discussion setting, meeting three times a week, two hours at each setting. I was the literature instructor.

From this experience I learned a great deal about the critical materials in religion and in Biblical criticism, of which I had known some previously. I developed the habit of reading a book or two a year in religious or Biblical criticism. I selected the books quite randomly, often because they were in a university press sale catalogue. I was given the 1,385-page Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible (Abingdon Press, 1971) for being best man in the wedding of a Lutheran pastor. I try to read one or two Biblical books a year. I rather enjoy them, much as some people enjoy Agatha Christie. Whole paragraphs are over my head. Terms of Greek and Hebrew grammar and language structure pass over me like an adult conversation over the head of a five-year-old. After years of immersing myself in this field of criticism, I am only just beginning to have a discriminating taste.

After teaching at Jefferson Community College for several years, I noticed in the University of Kentucky Bulletin English 270, Literature of the Old Testament; and English 271, Literature of the New Testament. I knew that technically as a branch we could teache any of the 100-level and 200-level classes. I asked and was given permission to teach English 270, and later 271. To my surprise I had about 15 students sign up, several of our best students planning to transfer to the University, one as an English major. Certainly several of these students signed up merely because of the word "Bible." Most of the students were over age 25. Being a

novice, and on the advice of one colleague, I selected for my text Reynolds Price's A Palpable God (Atheneum, 1978), and on the advice of a Centre College graduate, who also has a B.A. and M.A. from Oxford and an M. Div. from the Episcopal Seminary in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Oxford Study Edition of the New English Bible (NEB). But I did not make the student get the NEB; I used it, but enjoyed having passages read from multiple translations, and of course gave the appropriate speech periodically on the wonderful Shakespearian language of the King James Version. Price's opening long essay on narrative is startling and worthy of some serious consideration. In essence, he states that narrative ranks with food and before love and shelter as basic to human needs. The selection in his book, therefore, are Biblical narratives. Price sets a tone for the course, the need for story, the need for explanation. This argument also provides a psychological and sociological underpinning for the course, by-passing the issue of religion per se. Since my students are a wild mixture of skeptic and religious, I must tread very lightly. For example, two students who completed the 270-271 sequence are now expectative students at Campbellsville College and Antioch College. Also, that first semester I made extensive use of the One Volume Interpreter's Bible, since Price's is literally a thin book. The Interpreter's Bible is valuable because it very carefully outlines the books considered, and teaches us to look not to the chapter and verse as in the English translation, but to the apparent original divisions, and thought divisions as seen in modern scholarship. I, of course, have learned that scholars differ here, but the Interpreter's Bible is old enough and well enough established and is found in most college library reference sections, so the students accept it without question. I therefore use it liberally. The first time I taught this sequence of courses, I carefully presented on the blackboard outline after outline. We looked at these readings carefully. We learned together how to look at the work almost as if there were no chapters and verses. We looked at thought clusters. Then students did projects of their own. If the class is a good working unit we give these projects orally as well as in a written report. In my very first class one adult male traveled to Italy on business; he took an extra few days--right in the middle of the semester--flew to Israel, took slides, and came back and discussed with us for a couple of classes his impressions and his guided tour notes. In the same class a black woman gave an

oral presentation on women in the Old Testament. Let me share with you a passage that is the background for a quotable quote from her presentation:

Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the King of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turnrd in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be when any man doth come, and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened him into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. And behold as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples. (Judges 4:17-22, KJV)

The student reporting looked out over the class triumphantly and said, "She nailed his head to the floor!" Every man in the room felt the awful power of women's liberation at that moment, and the shudder that went up my spine told me that I sensed for the first time the last moment of Sisera's life.

Price also has, without comment, the story of Jephthah. The normal modern interpretation is that Jephthah's daughter never married, but there is little doubt that the story of human sacrifice is not unlike Agamenon's sacrifice of Iphigenia. Jephthah's story lacks the redactor's hand that Abraham and Isaac receive. (Jephthah, Judges, chapter 11; Abraham and Isaac, Genesis, chapter 22)

I have never begun the course with Genesis, but normally with the Psalms, sometimes more random than other times, to give an overview of the ideas and ideals of the Hebrew peoples. I use C.S. Lewis's Reflections on the Psalms (Harcourt, Brace and World, a Harvest Book, 1958) as a backdrop, we well as the approach by Hermann Gunkel in The Psalms (Fortress Press, Facet Books, 1967,

Introduction and Translator's Preface, pp. iii-x; Bibliography, pp. 42-52); I also use the Interpreter's Bible and the Oxford Study Edition of the NEB, providing multiple approaches. I emphasize the most cruel of the psalms myself, showing the Hebrew people to be part of their time and place. Specific lines that I quote from Lewis are these:

In some of the Psalms the spirit of hatred which strikes us in the face is like the heat from a furnace mouth. In others the same spirit ceases to be frightful only by becoming (to a modern mind) almost comic in its naivete.

Examples of the first can be found all over the Psalter, but perhaps the worst is in 109. The poet prays that an ungodly man may rule over his enemy and that "Satan" may stand at his right hand (verse 5). This probably does not mean what a Christian reader naturally supposes. The "Satan" is an accuser, perhaps an informer. When the enemy is tried, let him be convicted and sentenced, "and let his prayer be turned into sin." (6) This again means, I think, not his prayers to God, but his supplications to a human judge, which are to make things all the hotter for him (double the sentence because he begged for it to be halved). May his days be few, may his job be given to someone else. (7) When he is dead may his orphans be beggars. (9) May he look in vain for anyone in the world to pity him. (11) Let God always remember against him the sins of his parents. (13) Even more devilish in one verse is the otherwise beautiful 137 where a blessing is pronounced on anyone who will snatch up a Babylonian baby and beat its brains out against the pavement. (9) And we get the refinement of malice in 69, 23, "Let their table be made a snare to take themselves withal; and let the things that should have been for their wealth be unto them an occasion of falling." (Lewis, pp. 20-21)

Every attentive reader of the Psalms will have noticed that they speak to us severely not merely about doing evil ourselves but about something else. In 26,4, the good man is not only free from "vanity" (falsehood) but has not even "dwelled with," [sic] been on intimate terms with, those who are "vain." He has "hated" them. (5) So in 31,7, he has "hated" idolaters. In 50, 18, God blames a man not for being a thief but for "consenting to" a thief. . . . Almost comically the Psalmist of 139 asks "Don't I hate those who

hate thee, Lord?. . . Why, I hate them as if they were my enemies!" (21,22) Now obviously all this—taking upon oneself to hate those whom one thinks God's enemies, avoiding the society of those one thinks wicked, judging our neighbors, thinking oneself "too good" for some of them (not in the snobbish way, which is a trivial sin in comparison, but in the deepest meaning of the words "too good")--is an extremely dangerous, almost fatal, game. (Lewis 66)

Closely connected with . . . what I have called "connivance" are the protests of the Psalter [sic] against other sins of the tongue. I think that when I began to read it these surprised me a little; I had half expected that in a simpler and more violent age when more evil was done with the knife, the big stick, and the firebrand, less would be done by talk. But in reality the Psalmists mention hardly any kind of evil more often than this one, which the most civilised societies share. "Their throat is an open sepulchre, they flatter" (5,10), "under his tongue is ungodliness and vanity", . . . "deceitful lips" (12,3) "lying lips" (31, 20), "words full of deceit" (36, 3), the "whispering" of evil men (41, 7), cruel lies that "cut like a razor" (52, 3), talk that sounds "smooth as oil" and will wound like a sword (55,22), pitiless jeering (102, 8). It is all over the Psalter. One almost hears the incessant whispering, tattling, lying, scolding, flattery, and circulation of rumors. No historical readjustments are here required; we are in the world we know. We even detect in that muttering and wheedling chorus voices which are familiar. One of them may be too familiar for recognition.

Some of these probably involve archaic, and even magical, ideas of a power intrinsic in words themselves, so that all blessings and cursings would be efficacious. (Lewis 75)

The opening Psalm unit allows me to set up two points:

1. The setting in the ancient Near East

2. The non-chronological collection of Hebrew literature

The next step is to go to the historical and geographical setting of the Hebrew people. I am able to do this very easily since I

have adopted the old Barnes and Noble College Outline series, The Bible as Literature, The Old Testament and Apocrypha by Buckner Trawick (Harper & Row, 1970), which gives a detailed background chapter. I have found that the students study this section with great seriousness and give back on the midterm often a whole page of writing on the climate and geography, far more than I know or care to know. But this seems valuable to them. More importantly, this order allows me to show how that the whole great historical section from Genesis through Ezra and Nehemiah is the product of the Babylonian Exile and post-Exilic rise of a religion of a conquered people. Hebrew literature as we have it was edited between 500 B.C. and 150 B.C. One book, namely Isaiah, is thought by some critics to be a microcosm of this general assumption, i.e., Proto-Isaiah, chapter 1-39, 8th century B.C.; Deutero-Isaiah, chapters 40-55, 6th century B.C.; Trito-Isaiah, chapters 56-66, "consolidated at some time between 520 and 470 B.C." (Trawick 226, whose source is Julius A. Brewer (ed.) The Prophets, Harper & Row, 1955, 141-142)

So Hebrew literature is really a looking back and writing up and editing up, and as it were, sewing of a seamless garment from multiple stories and long since lost records dating back in time that the priestly writers-editors of the period 500-150 B.C. probably could not fathom.

It is with this historical perspective of Exile and post-Exilic Jews looking back to 1000 B.C. and earlier, into lost time, that we approach Genesis, seeing it as a book of two parts:

I. Primitive History, chapters 1-11

II. Patriarchal History, chapters 12-50

So what have I done so far in the first three units of the course? What tone have I set? What teaching and learning techniques have I used or introduced?

1. At one extreme, I use simple outlining to perceive thought units that are not pericopes, i.e., theological teaching units.

2. I use the outlining and other scholarship to teach that

chronology is not necessarily an issue or a concern of an author or editor.

3. I assign portions of Hebrew literature to demonstrate that--like any other literature--it is not pious, goody-two-shoes, in tone, edited by Pollyanna.

4. I allow the third item to come from the class, not trying to superimpose the idea on them. Sometimes it comes up in a private conversation, sometimes public.

5. I try to set an inquiring tone.

6. I try to show that "history" is a modern concept traceable only to the Enlightenment, Thucydides and Matthew Paris to the contrary. Our understanding of fact is scientific, so we learn about sacred history vs secular history.

7. I try to show that climate, history, geography, are basic to understanding a literature.

8. I introduce an approach that looks at the settings from sociological and psychological perspectives.

9. I assign students to write test questions and answers (each answer must be 3-5 complete sentences), so that they participate in the teaching-learning process. Modified, these questions are used on the mid-term and final.

There is one other ingredient that I use, resource people and audio visual aids:

Each time that I have taught the course, I have had the opportunity to have a friend who lives in Chicago come in and speak, often for two or three class sessions. He knows Hebrew, Greek, Latin, as well as Slovak, Polish, and English, equally well. He has not turned age 30, but he will soon. He has always been an inspiration to the class and he provides multiple handouts. The last time that he spoke, I video taped his presentation because I know that I cannot have a graduate student of his caliber always available. (I recently used that video tape as background in an

English 261, World Literature I, class in the unit on Hebrew Literature.) This resource person runs the class through the Hebrew alphabet and key Hebrew words, which the students always know for their tests. He also provides a time line of the writings of Hebrew literature and explains the canonization of Hebrew scriptures at the Synod of Jamnia in 98 A.D.

Further, for several years, we had a night secretary in the Humanities Division at Jefferson Community College who was a graduate student at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary who had gone on two digs to Israel. She had a wonderful presence that is quite different from mine, and she came and gave slide presentations of her trips and discussed her perspectives of the relationship of Hebrew writing to archeology. Now that she is gone, I have her on a video tape the Southern Seminary made of her and others on that dig. It is an excellent tape, which stimulates conversation, discussion, and private investigation on the part of some students.

Now just let me share with you two or three more books that have been valuable assets to me as I have evolved in my teaching of the Bible as Literature. Then I want to solicit your comments and questions.

Denis Baly's God and History in the Old Testament (Harper & Row, 1976) has been a very valuable book. I have used it as a second text for several years. I think that I shall not use it next year when I offer the course again, but it is a source that is heavily imbedded in my brain and in my lecture-discussion notes. Baly has a very particular approach, at times eccentric. For example, he gives very minor attention to Job, treating it as an allegory of the Davidic-Solomon Period, the Babylonian Exile, and the post-Exile period under Ezra and Nehemiah. Baly's chapter on the Psalms is largely limited to the death psalms and the Hebrew idea that the grave or afterlife does not include a Resurrection; certainly true, but an odd limitation of the psalms.

Northrop Frye's THE GREAT CODE: The Bible and Literature (Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, 1982) is the only work that I know that treats the Bible as a complete book Old Testament-New Testament in and of itself. He comes to it as a cultural phenomenon in

the English-speaking world, as a book that is truly read as a whole by most people and to see it as a seamless garment, since that is the way it is read, scholarship to the contrary. Typically Frye has his own unique reading of this book. Frye sees the Bible in the following divisions:

Language I
Myth I
Metaphor I
Typology I
Typology II

Phases of Revelation
1. Creation
2. Revolution
3. Law
4. Wisdom
5. Prophecy
6. Gospel
7. Apocalypse

Metaphor II
Imagery
Myth II
Narrative
Language II
Rhetoric

"Gospel" and the "Apocalypse" bring us quickly to the New Testament and to the end of my allotted space.*

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*For the New Testament Literature, I use The Bible as Literature, The New Testament, also by Buckner Trawick, also in the College Outline Series, also published by Harper & Row. As a second text I have used Norman Perrin and Dennis C. Duling, The New Testament, An Introduction (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982, 2nd ed.). Also Richmond Lattimore, has published a literary translation with Preface of The Four Gospel and the Revelation (Farrar-Straus-Giroux, 1979) and Acts and Letters of the Apostles (Farrar-Straus-Giroux, 1982).

Now I turn to you for questions, comments, and suggestions. I perceive this as a working paper and a call for personal aid and comfort of a colleague who has bitten off more than he can chew, but is masticating as best he can under the circumstances.

C.S. Lewis states in the introduction to his Reflections on the Psalms (pp. 1, 2):

This is not a work of scholarship. I am no Hebraist, no higher critic, no ancient historian, no archaeologist. I write for the unlearned about things in which I am unlearned myself.

. . . I write as one amateur to another, talking about difficulties I have met, or lights I have gained, ...

Umbrella Courses: Shelters and Showcase

Kathryn Lillyman
Sauk Valley College
Dixon, Illinois

Umbrella courses are just that: they give shelter to the student seeking an exciting new course option in the humanities and they can also be showy and showcase items--an umbrella with some plan for its presentor-professor. Here the film buff English teacher can package in the shade of the umbrella course, his consuming interest in, and knowledge of sixty years of American film-making. The current feminist of the '80's, the man-in-other worlds sci-fi enthusiast, the philosophy pundit, the cross/culture and cross/literature reader: these are your colleagues and they are dying to present their ancillary interests. One can present just so many semesters of American or English Literature or just so many genre courses.

To be specific. I come from a small two-year college, but our staff of English professors is tremendously versatile. Their interests range widely, as do their studies. But show-off time is at a premium for them. We established an Umbrella Course which lists one course (approved by all the committees and duly articulated with state universities) which is called Eng 206: Topics in Literature. There follows a precise statement of the exact specialty to be explored, but each new offering is again watched over, approved by deans and and curriculum committee. The vehicle is designed to help the student to find a new voice, sheltered as he is by the umbrella and to abet the presentation of some quality courses that might find difficulty in passing the scrutiny of being at the "elementary two year college" level. Given a new format, your professors in the English and humanities departments might become enamored of the chance to do their own thing, say their own special words, share their out-of-hours' interests and add a different course to their listings of classes offered.

A play on words at this point could lead us to declare that the "Umbrageous Umbrella" would be a worthy title here. This title is alliterative, unusual, but expresses in essence the exact attitude

we have taken toward our umbrella course, Eng 206: Topics in Literature. "Umbrageous" means "shady, shadowy, to be brought into clear, sharp focus." That is, indeed, the benchmark of any well-crafted course. The clarity of focus we have found in our umbrella course is brought about only through the careful course sculpting of our showcase professors. The focus of years spent traveling is sharpened; another course is born. Avocational delights are revealed to the enlightenment of the student, the enrichment of the professor and the fall-out glow of new enthusiasms for all concerned.

To pursue the aptness of the "umbrageous" word that I apply to our course, I found in the dictionary a quotation from Robert Louis Stevenson: "making a glowworm halo in the umbrageous alleys." Why not let Eng 206 carry out this mission? Why not bring to light, to sun-dappled awareness, a few of the golden nuggets we had snaked through the umbrageous alleys of undergraduate education? There are times, weary times, monotonous times when no "halo"--even that of a glowworm--can emanate from the repetition, again, of standard literature courses as colleges have been forced to offer them. The prof needs to refuel and the kids need to break away from the traditional. Sometimes. To a small degree. And in so doing, Sauk has found the "glowworm halo of light" which evolved through packaging and participating in exciting vistas of new fields. Through packaging five courses under our umbrella.

At Sauk Valley College we did not need to go far afield to find specialists who stood, enthusiasm in hand, only too willing to tailor their own special glowworms of knowledge to Special Topics in Literature dimensions. A course description is not that hard to write when ideas have been a-brewing for years and a teacher is skilled and happy under this new-found umbrella. After a year of articulation efforts through the Dean and the Humanities Department and the Curriculum Committee, we received the message: "Yes, this is a viable transfer level course as a humanities elective'." I can only remind you here that years ago there was a great deal of in-fighting amongst the same power groups: Flower Arrangement was never accepted as a humanities elective. The flowers wilted en route through articulation.

The brain-storming that followed the politics was relatively easy. We had a good notion of those who were dying to do something

different that was marketable. We knew of those with secret causes--Karen called her Special Topics, "Women in Literature." Who had a past career that merged into his present English professor status? John, a minister in years gone by, was stunned by the ethical, philosophical and psychological intricacies of Literature of Violence. He built a course that the students like. Ed has traveled to movie showings for years. His passion for film, old and new, combined with excellent critiquing skills, has led to sharing this wealth with students in Special Topics: Film.

I speak to you as a professor of modern languages and also as an English teacher of many classes in remedial English, freshman composition and rhetoric, and English as a Second Language. Since my degrees are in Spanish, I've spent a lot of time with the literature of Spain and South America and, on the border where Arizona and New Mexico join Mexico, in the land of the Chicano. Naturally, the brand new (for me) field of Chicano Literature emerged. It is a rich, beautiful, of-this-decade literature, unknown to many English teachers, even though class enrollments in many community colleges are heavily Chicano. From visualizing the course, to be known at Sauk--a two year college--as Chicano Literature, to the reality of presenting my pet project was a rocky trip. Most universities offer a Chicano literature course at the 300 or 400 level. Most offer it in the Spanish Department, although by far the majority of the works are written in English. At this point, the welcome shelter of the umbrella, the umbrageous umbrella and some more work in articulation. I have offered the course only three or four times, but it is important that you hear a little about this Chicano audience and the services that our community college has offered. Many Chicanos have dim knowledge of the roots of the complicated heritage that sets them into and at the same time apart from the Anglo community. The family self-identity is great in Chicano communities, but heritage, history, what Octavio Paz calls a "cosmic consciousness" is all but obliterated by two or three generations of United States schooling and acculturation to the Anglo way. The choice of reading for students with such fragmented backgrounds now exists. Chicano literature as a genre has come of age.

I have spoken with many teachers who seem to sense a kind of malaise among Chicano students. Certainly their dropout rate is depressing. We know that this may be the last chance to entice and

excite with beautiful literature the eighteen to twenty year old Chicano student who is probably enrolled in practical business or human service courses at the community college. We know that scarcely 5 per cent of our Chicano population goes on to the universities and it is there that a course known as "Chicano Literature" may be offered to them. My protest is: "What of the non-transfer student? Nineteen year olds are Chicanos too!" There should be a way at the level of the community college to teach the plays, stories, novels--not to mention the poetry--of an emerging and articulate group of authors.

We found the way. The target audience was made up of the Tejano adult who had always worked at the steel mill and was seeking a knowledge of his roots, the lady who was newly-awakened to Chicana roles in schools and government, the old reliable English majors and English teachers and bicultural teachers. The list goes on. Personally, I like my course best with an Anglo-Chicano mix, as the existence of divergent points of view and interpretations makes for good class chemistry. From evaluations after the course was completed, I can find only "it's a fascinating literature" voiced by all members of the class.

To the request for a definition of Chicano literature, I turn to the words of Professor Luis Fernandez from Western Illinois University.

"We try to define it (la literatura chicana), although there are always elements that escape. It is the expression of experience and reality as perceived by Chicano writers within the United States, whose principle themes are dictated first by nostalgia for the country of origin and then by the battle undertaken to achieve equality and social justice within the Anglo-predominant society."

How may I, a non-Chicana, equipped only with some courses called Chicano Literature, presume to teach this course? I looked around me and discovered that there is a wealth of literature unknown and untouched by those who do claim Chicano roots, who long to reach a little beyond the stark realities of Chicanismos in the kitchen, with the children, in the bar. The course needed teaching and I wanted to teach it!

There is a dream; there is a "cosmic consciousness," and there is a hallucinatory spell that the language of Chicano Literature can and does evoke for the student. This spell is best described by Carlos Fuentes in his new novel Distant Relations. He states, "The atmosphere can evoke a time that is not our own, invisible, without end, and as secret as the ageless voices which have remained suspended throughout time, awaiting the person who will rediscover and rearrange them." In this literature we are in touch with an evanescent world: a world of fantasy or reality that we may approach as teacher of English or of Spanish in the community college. But we must approach it with care. Particularly must I approach it with care. I am not a Chicana and to tell a Chicano about his literature, and the literary heritage of his people, is tricky.

Basic to the Chicano movement itself, and in particular to recent Chicano history and literature, is the revolt against earlier attempts of Anglo society to remove the capital "R" from the Raza (the Race) of the Mexican-Americans. The repeated cry is "Viva la Raza!" A little history of both Mexico and the more recent Aztlan movement and a little sociology and even some semantics must serve as foundation stones in planning and/presenting such a course. While we are doing this, we must make clear that immigrants from Mexico to the United States use la raza as an all-encompassing term suggesting the vast spread of their culture from Mexico northward into the southwestern United States. The long and detailed series of filmstrips called La Raza--the Mexican Americans--published by Multi-Media Productions, Inc. is invaluable as an introduction. How much of a literature is based on the premise that before the written word, there were actions, wars, a culture. I find the filmstrips particularly valuable when I teach this course at night once a week. Thoughts and discussion are stirred; variety to the lecture/discussion is offered.

What should be read in a class of Chicano Literature? There are several anthologies. I have alternated between a long, bilingual one, Literatura Chicana Texto y Contexto by Antonia Casteneda Shular et al., and Chicano Voices by Carlota Cardenas de Dwyer. The latter is tightly organized and easy for good syllabus arrangement. I prefer now to have students buy the shorter Dwyer anthology and then require that they buy a classic Chicano novel, Bless Me, Ultima. Here we meet a young Chicano boy as he merges

into the reality of schooling in English, but with it he lives the beautiful world of Hispanic "fantasia" and its myths of the magical carp that dwells in golden pools. And the magical owl that hovers, protects and warns the witch doctor, grandmotherly figure Ultima. Myth, "flor y canto" (flower and song). No one who has read Bless Me, Ultima will ever feel the same lack of interest in an owl. Nor in an old witch doctor. Nor in one young man's emergence from the prejudice he had experienced about him all his life. Don't require too many reading skills of some of the reality-oriented community college students. Bless Me, Ultima is a joy to read.

I like, however, to challenge for A's the special students (like the teachers of English from local high schools) who can speak with some knowledge and feeling about a work's texture, its density, the persona and the voices. I speak now of the second book that some can and will choose to read--either in Spanish or English, and that is Pedro Paramo by Juan Rulfo. Rulfo comes from an Indian village south of Guadalajara. Technically, he is not a Chicano, but he has written a Mexican-Chicano-any language masterpiece. Inquire of the Chicanos in your class--even those two or three generations away from Mexico--what they know of the Day of the Dead, "El Dia de los Muertos." They all know a lot about death. Perhaps no book delves so deeply into the mystery of death as does Pedro Paramo. Death is real, so real in fact, that after I had loaned the English version to our Oral Interpretation teacher at Sauk, he made a Readers' Theater script of it and his group took state honors for the presentation. A teacher who finds such a gem of literature, who can excite the students with the density of the word magic and images, is a fortunate being.

What do students of the '80's make of their roles as Chicanos in a farm-land area of Illinois? I don't think there has been much change in the overall pattern of thought since the introduction of my Chicano Lit course, but I do feel much better about my role as a teacher. Students wrote, "I never dreamed there was so much good literature," and "I feel much better about myself as a Chicano since reading all these works."

Here, as a final challenge to teachers of literature, I ask: Go over your class lists of Chicanos. Search out the thespians or anyone who might enjoy directing (a necessary first if you are not a thespian yourself), play-acting and rehearsals. Then let the

students stage one of the Actos (one act plays) from Luis Valdez' Teatro Campesino (Farmers theater). These are in English, with enough pithy down-to-earth Spanish to provide laughs. And in your classes you will be lucky enough to find a born actor-director who will rally the troops for Sunday afternoon rehearsals. At least, I was lucky. Their production of a Chicano play was a great success; the group of relatives including grandparents and babes-in-arms was large and enthusiastic and the group from our college staff was equally impressed. The second time around we made a TV filming of the play (in this case Los Vendidos, meaning the Sold-out Ones) and since that time I have carried the video tape with the fun and enthusiasm of Chicano theater to local high schools, to meetings of the American Association of Spanish Teachers, to church groups and family gatherings.

Are these productions a far-out limit for literature? Does a community reach too far if a college gives voice to such efforts? Weren't Shakespeare's productions designed for the common folk? Isn't play-acting by students the best way to glimpse "literature" and re-create their own impressions? I was warmed by this experience. Together, students, audience and a community college had brought a focus to "literature." We had brought it to life. And it was all because we had that wonderful umbrella course!

Teaching Writing Through Literature:
Toward the Acquisition of a Knowledge Base

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Finally! A chance to tell you what I did on my summer vacation. Much of what I would like to share with you today is based on readings and discussions that formed the basis of an NEH seminar, Composition: Style and the Nature of Discourse, given by Joseph Williams at the University of Chicago. During this seminar, I became aware of the current rift between the teaching of writing and the teaching of literature. I directed my reading to those articles that try to reconcile this separation and point to ways in which literature can be used as a knowledge base in the writing class.

Perhaps the real issue we need to address is, "What is the future of the teacher of literature at the two-year college?" You may be aware that a battle is currently being fought. Some see themselves as teachers of literature, having studied literary history and literary criticism. Others see themselves as teachers of composition, having been trained in the research and teaching of writing. Frederick Crews suggests that one camp cries MLA, to which the other camp replies CCCC.(Horner 159)

The breach widens, but the history of that breach is relatively new. Those who are concerned with the future of literature in particular and liberal arts in general will have to find a way to narrow this gulf since, in reality, literature and composition cannot be separated either in theory or in teaching practice, but are rather opposite sides of the same coin.(2)

Departments of English Literature have existed since about 1880; departments of English and American Literature since about 1930. Little by little, these departments became increasigly fragmented into departments of speech, logic, journalism, comparative literature and communications. We need ways to reintegrate our methods since our goals are to teach composition, language,

literature and reading. J.N. Hook foresees the birth, or rebirth, of an ideal department in which literature has an honored but not dominant role.(270)

This new department must integrate several ways of teaching literature and writing to meet the needs of our changing student population so that the teaching of literature is not so much the central issue, but rather a means to an end--a contribution to the general education and liberal learning of our students. A movement from training in literature towards training in communications can lead only to a reduction of students' familiarity with the canons of literature.(Fowler 43)

But a truly integrated Department of English will deal equally with composition, language, literature and reading. According to the ADE 1981-1982 Writing and Literature Survey, 75 per cent of community college instruction is in writing, with 11 per cent instruction in literature and 13 per cent devoted to "other." The teaching of literature, nationwide, took up only one-third of the typical English Department.(Young 53) The reason was that as writing courses became more popular, with increased teaching loads in classes such as technical writing, business and professional writing, advertising, and creative writing, literature offerings suffered a decline.

Working backwards in time, in a 1974 ADE Study of Freshman English, there was a marked de-emphasis on literature. The rationale offered in that study was that more time was needed to spend on practical skills. (Tigar 15) In his presidential address to the MLA in 1977, Alan Hollingsworth argued for a "Composition program embedded in a sufficiently rich matrix of literature, literary criticism and language study or students would risk being cut off from the insights of hundreds of years of literature, literary study and language theory."(MLA)

Today, the pendulum may have swung to the point where it seems like heresy to introduce literature into the composition class. "Many modern composition specialists see any study of high literature in the freshman program as an attempt by professors trained in criticism to evade the alien discipline of composition teaching." (Scott 3)

Listen to the rationale offered by one writing teacher on the dangers of what happens when a composition teacher "sneaks" literature into the classroom. It leads one to think that the teacher is seducing his students with pornography. "Literature is so attractive to the typical English teacher and can be made so attractive to the student that it often turns out to be a distraction from the main objective of a composition course, which is to teach students how to write the kind of utilitarian prose they will be asked to produce in their other college classes and later on in their jobs. The class then becomes primarily a workshop in how to read a poem or a play, or a novel or a short story. Before long the writing class has turned into a seminar in literary criticism." (Corbett 181)

He continues in this vein, speaking of the need to keep teachers "on target," keeping them from "bootlegging literary texts into the course," and of instructors who fall prey to the "siren call of literature." Straying from the objectives of the course is considered an "aberration" and literature itself become a "temptation that is dangled before our instructors."

This line of reasoning, it seems to me, is valid only if we are trying to protect our students from encountering literature before they are prepared to read it. If we cannot prepare them properly at this stage in their intellectual careers, who can? Or perhaps it assumes that some other kind of writing exercises need to be performed before the student can encounter a text. Or perhaps we fear that the person who teaches the composition class is really trained as a literary critic and cannot deal with the theory of teaching writing, which only recently has gained status as a respectable discipline.

If those ADE reports are true, then who has been teaching those newly popular writing classes? Can the literary critics teach writing? That question seems to be at the heart of the issue. But those very teachers are also accused of being unable to teach literature in a meaningful way, if they continue to teach literary criticism as they themselves were taught it. If this is so, then their classes may consist of a more-or-less passive audience, sitting while the teacher, as master-reader, master-critic, shows what he knows, displays his own critical skills, explains meaning, wittingly or otherwise, to his students.(Summerfield 121) The first

counter-productive habit we can break as teachers is not to give our own accounts of the text, but allow the student to become a bona-fide reader and interpreter.

How, then, teach literature? What is its proper role in the curriculum of the two-year college? Whether they occur in a community college or in a four-year college, the first two years of college are crucial.(Lanham 10) In the undergraduate sequence the first two years stand at the center of the educational experience. They are, as Richard Lanham says, the aim towards which the high school curriculum builds. From them, the specialized major departs. In the community college the first two years represent, for some, the last chance for a formal education. It would be very easy for us to construct a case around the argument that reading the classics, or high literature, helps our students become better writers. But unfortunately, that is not a valid statement.

Why not just content ourselves with teaching the established composition courses and let it go at that? And why do the established composition courses prove to be a series of disjointed exercises that fulfill the requirements of a syllabus? Often, the essays in our rhetoric readers are construed by students as scattered bodies of knowledge. They find it difficult to respond to the essays. Some students may never see even those essays, since the "text" for class discussion is the material written by other students.

In an attempt to make the writing class more palatable, some instructors argue that literature has too much power to be subordinated to student writing in class work. They claim that the group itself is the producer of literature. Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Deem use this approach. "When we say that our students' writing is literature, we are asked, 'How do you define literature?' Here the definition is simple. What we pay attention to is literature. Our paying attention to it and the kind of attention we pay to it helps make it literature."(70)

Literature provides a rich knowledge base. School districts, colleges and universities are restructuring their curricula to teach critical thinking skills. The good news is that critical thinking can be taught. The bad news is that all recent studies in cognitive development suggest that critical thinking must be

learned in context, with a knowledge of, and experience in, a specific field. "Improvement in the field skills of learning, such as required on aptitude and intelligence tests, takes place through the excercise of conceptual and procedural knowledge in the context of specific domains."(Glaser 99) Combining the teaching of writing while confronting a literary text, would, as E.D. Hirsch, Jr., writes, bring together the technical skills of composition and the cultural knowledge within the linguistic form and cultural content literature has to offer.(Horner 147) Futhermore, by using suggestions and techniques that are described in the many journals devoted to the teaching of writing, it becomes evident that it is possible to use literature without subordinating the teaching of writing to the study of literature per se.

The freshman composition course as it is sometimes taught today seems designed to frustrate both student and teacher. If we concede that critical thinking skills are based on both knowledge and experience, what knowledge and what experience does the average freshman bring with him to the college?

How realistic are the assignments that are forced out of students in an attempt to teach them the paradigms presented in the composition books? How many more times can we read a three-page paper on cooked-up subjects? J. Hillis Miller acknowledges the huge burden placed on writing teachers under the current system. "Most teachers of composition no doubt find themselves again and again in the somewhat embarrassing situation of teaching not just grammar and rhetoric but also logic, ethics, politics, and even something of theology and the music of the spheres." (40) The solution seems obvious--have the teacher teach the subject matter that forms his own knowledge base.

"To the degree that we have a choice of what we teach, we should try to devise courses around subjects that in themselves contribute to that special kind of hard thinking that is good writing."(61) Wayne Booth's recommendations for teaching what he refers to as LITCOMP successfully point the way toward a reintegration of literature and composition. His list includes:

1. the writing of frequent papers
2. instances of writing, rather than excercises in writing
3. critical responses from readers the students respect

4. small course loads
5. mechanisms that allow students to address each other
6. instructors who have taken instruction in writing
7. reading a wide range of literature.

These suggestions touch on most of the ideas currently under discussion. We know that our incoming freshmen are not used to writing. We also know that we are teaching students for whom English is, or is like, as Booth notes, a second language. There are no quick fixes to this problem, and the solution is to force students to write more. It doesn't matter that it may be someone else's fault that they haven't written more in the past. The answer is to make sure they get as much practice in reading and writing as they can now.

Mina Shaughnessy, writing about the challenges she encountered as she taught the first students under the City University of New York's Open Admissions Program, cites a number of problems that won't go away. Students do not write frequent or long papers in high school. "They have been writing infrequently, and then only in such artificial and strained situations that the communicative purpose of writing has rarely if ever seemed real." (14) To some of them, the act of simply pushing a pencil across a sheet of blank paper is a task in itself.

As these freshmen move into the college curriculum, there is very little guarantee that they will be forced to write more frequently, or to use those skills they have learned in their composition classes. Colleges concerned with this issue have taken steps to implement a writing across the curriculum approach. But it remains clear that if the student sees no relationship between the kind of work he is required to produce to pass the typical freshman composition course and the amount of reading and writing he is expected to do in his other courses, he will not be stimulated to write in depth. He will take the course and get it over with. The lesson is driven home further if the tests the student takes contain no essay questions and if he is never asked to write another paper for his other courses.

When we communicate the habit of frequent writing to our students, we must be careful that we do not expect perfectly polished

pieces, for therein lies our own frustration. We must encourage them to keep journals, to get into the habit of sharing their pre-writing, and to explain that revision means just that--re-seeing the work, not merely changing a few words. There is value to having the work judged by peers, who may offer further insights and make suggestions which the student can then act upon. His work will have some significance to someone other than his English teacher. The teacher must act as facilitator and is responsible for fostering a climate of trust and respect. There is also a value to the kind of writing that helps the student as he charters new universes of discourse. Often, this kind of writing takes the shape of a chronicle, as the student explains how he came to see what he now knows. The student must instatiate knowledge before he can substantiate it and manipulate a new body of material.

What some teachers may brusquely dismiss as "mere summary" is the end result of a complex series of operations. While summaries are not ends in themselves, they are valuable focusing exercises. Recent research confirms that reading and writing are similar, if not identical, mental operations.

Various proponents of reader-based theories refer to a kind of thinking and writing process that is a necessary step to writing. This kind of thinking and pre-writing has been given various names. Lev Vygotsky refers to it as "inner speech."(149) Linda Flower calls it "writer based prose."(41) David Bleich calls it "resymbolization."(passim) Peter Elbow, a long-time proponent of free writing as a liberating excercise calls it "first-order writing. (37) These theories argue that readers process experience through personal associations, prior cognitive schemes, and personal memories. This kind of reading and writing represents a valid and necessary first step that leads to finished prose. Sharing first responses, no matter how crude, and first drafts, no matter how sketchy, serves as a springboard for the thorough development of more finished pieces. Students' responses to the text become the basis for work which unifies writing, reading, thinking and interpretive abilities.(Petersen 461) A reader-based approach does not argue that the end product be "feelings," but it argues that inner response and reaction is a desirable starting place.

Response to literature can be taught as a hierarchy of steps, moving from reader response to noting given information in the text. From this point, the student can move to searching for implied information, and searching for generalizations.

A real-life activity could involve the use of summary and reactions beginning as a simple focusing exercise and moving to more generalized and complex applications. Take, for example, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, a novel taught in many American literature classes, and currently back in the headlines. The first step might be to have the student summarize the novel, or parts of it, or to describe characters in the novel as though he were writing a letter to a friend. The second step might involve having the student come up with his own summary that will serve as a personal study guide. From there, he might summarize an aspect of the novel to demonstrate his understanding of it to his instructor or to his classmates. He might be given this "real-life" assignment:

The Board of Education at your local high school is aware that some school districts are claiming that this novel should be removed from the shelves. How would you summarize Huckleberry Finn for this audience, and how would you persuade them to keep it or remove it?

In each instance, the student must change his tone, his approach, his overall rhetorical skills and critical thinking skills in order to suit his audience. He is asked to manipulate knowledge as he becomes more familiar with both the work and its analysis.

Perhaps the composition class as we know it in the two-year college should be saved for the sophomore year. It could then serve the student better if only for the simple reason that the sophomore will have lived a year longer and learned a year's worth of knowledge. Lacking that knowledge, not knowing how to read analytically, we should not be surprised when students are literally at a loss for words both in class and on paper.

Using a reader-based model for teaching literary texts is one way to avoid turning a writing class into a class on literary criticism. Using a reader-based model induces students to produce

their own reactions rather than having to listen to what their instructor knows. By decentralizing the role of the lecturer, we fulfill Booth's third criterion. We provide a basis for shared conversation. We give the students a voice in the class, an opportunity to respond to their thoughts while getting feedback from both their colleagues and their intructor.

In most two-year colleges, students will not take Introduction to Literature. But Writing Through Literature may help develop composition skills. Properly taught, this class could dispel the misconception that literature is wrought with hidden meanings and that the teacher has cornered the market on the author's intentions. Writing in response to literature uses literature as a stimulus that leads to inner responses. It creates relationships between reader and text, reader and reader, and reader and teacher. This helps the student produce observations and make inferences within a discourse of knowledge. And that is the goal of critical thinking.

Reading and writing skills can be taught without turning a class into a series of lectures on literary criticism. This approach at least ensures that students have something they can take with them at the end of the course, even if it is merely an insight into the literary aspects of our culture. Crews asks, "After a composition class, do we have a group of writers before us? We have experimental subjects who have provisionally mastered several useful techniques but who still lack the integration skills that makes for permanent gains. If we are aiming at something more than what the educationists call "exit" behaviors we should at least...give our students a close encounter with shrewdly chosen readings." He continues, "Students [in a composition class] often need to be coaxed into making an initial response from which a thesis could be developed. But even the wariest among them can find in literature a preformed world, full of images, stories, and enacted values that intersect their lives in any number of ways." (Crews 166)

Teaching literature as a basis for teaching writing affords a paradigm for teaching structure and meaning. Elaine Maimon, concerned with issues of writing across the curriculum, bases her work on the assumption that the forms of writing within a particular intellectual community manifest modes of thinking within that

community.(20) Students should be encouraged to enter the community of academic and public conversation to help keep the greater conversation of culture going.(Bruffee 635) Literature is a highly valued part of our culture, as are the other branches of the humanities. Literature can help students learn to read in a rewarding way, so that they come to understand that there are many modes of discourse. By learning to read literature, by wrestling with the human concerns it presents, they may enhance their powers of analysis. Literature provides a framework of reflection, contemplation and insight and may point the way for students to continue their own self-education.

You may be familiar with the move toward cultural literacy--the shared values, conventions, and knowledge bases that help a reader to construct meaning from a text. Reading skills, like writing skills, vary from task to task. "The idea that reading is a general, transferable skill unrelated to subject matter is essentially wrong."(Hirsch 8) No writer ever starts from scratch--his readers, must, to a greater or less extent, "fill in" meanings to the text. Sociolinguists and psycholinguists knew this twenty years ago. A writer who has been truly socialized into his discipline knows the tacit conventions, that which he is allowed to leave out, counting on his readers to reconstruct knowledge as they read the text. Those students who score higher on the verbal SAT's do so because they have acquired knowledge through wide reading in many domains over a period of time. Cultural literacy, then, is defined as "the knowledge that enables a writer or reader to know what other writers or readers know within the literate culture."(Hirsch)

Other research in cognitive psychology and artificial intelligence shows that knowledge is at the base of all problem solving. The teacher's task is to discover what knowledge is needed for a class of tasks and to discover how to communicate that knowledge effectively to his students.(Greeno 10) Other related studies argue that readers are constantly being asked to bridge inferences through what are referred to as schemas or scripts. One simple example involves the following story:

"John was feeling very hungry when he entered the restaurant. He settled himself at a table and noticed that the waiter was nearby. Suddenly, however, he realized that he'd forgotten his reading glasses."

What inferences have we bridged? How do we know that John must read a menu? Because we have knowledge of, and experience in, what goes on in a restaurant. As Robert P. Abelson states, we have a prepared script.(716) We modify that script for trips to McDonald's and trips to restaurants where the script calls for making a reservation. Similarly, cultural literacy forms a kind of script. In a more complex illustration, Hirsch quotes the following excerpt from the Washington Post.(10)

> A federal appeals panel today upheld an order barring foreclosure on a Missouri farm, saying that U.S. Agriculture Secretary John R. Block has reneged on his responsibilities to some debt-ridden farmers. The appeals panel directed the USDA to create a system of processing loan deferments and of publicizing them as it said Congress had intended. The panel said that it is the responsibility of the agriculture secretary to carry out this intent "not as a private banker, but as a public broker."

A culturally literate person, argues Hirsch, will understand this text as a whole. Since the newspaper reporter cannot provide all the necessary background, much of the schema, or filling in, depends on knowing information such as, "Who gave the order that the federal panel upheld?" and, "What is a federal appeals panel?" Even if the reader understood each word in the text, he could not understand the text, because he lacks all the background information that should form the necessary background knowledge of a truly literate American.

Literacy depends on specific, finite, sometimes superficial knowledge. Informed readers fall back on this body of knowledge constantly. Hirsch, with the help of an historian and a natural scientist, has drawn up a list of background knowledge people need to have by the time they graduate from high school. The list includes pre-1865 people such as John Adams, Benedict Arnold, Daniel Boone and John Brown. It includes the large realm of allusion that belongs to our literary and mythic heritage and forms a shorthand for writers, such figures as Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Humpty Dumpty, Jack and Jill, Achilles, Adonis and Aeneas.

I began by saying that critical thinking, as much as we would like to have it otherwise, is not a generic skill. Nor is reading and writing. Problem solving, comprehension, and learning are based on knowledge. People continually try to understand and think about the new in terms of what they already know.(Glaser 100) Critical thinking, problem solving, reading, comprehension, and writing skills must be taught within a content area and not as discrete excersises. Teaching literature as a knowledge base and using literature for writing assignments doesn't guarantee that this skill will transfer to another area. Each subject area presents students with its own set of knowledge, with its own form of discourse. Why then, teach writing through literature?

Two-year colleges have made a commitment to educate, and not just train their students. If we want to be here asking the question, "What is the future of literature in the two-year college?" a few years from now, we will have to make a strong case for including literature in the curriculum now, if only to keep our own conversations going.

Robert Scholes would have us move literature down from its reverential status and teach it because our "current students are part of a manipulative culture--deprived in experience in the thoughtful reading and writing of verbal texts. They need knowledge and skill that will allow them to make sense of their worlds...to see through the manipulation and learn to express their own views."(5) He continues, "A writing approach to literary texts, in which students write in the forms they are reading, or use such texts as intertexts for writing in other forms, not only will improve their ability to write in all forms of discourse, but will also improve their ability to read and interpret texts."(108)

Perhaps our reasons for wanting to make room for the study of literature may be explained in political, cultural, and economic terms, and I am sure each of you here could produce the standard five-paragraph paper on those reasons. Ultimately, the real reason cannot be explained in any logical manner. It may have to be couched in emotional terms. Richard Lanham, who has grappled with the literacy crisis caused in part by our radically changing student population, suggests that this crisis "...may redeem both our teaching and our research and put literary study back in the

center of modern humanism where in our hearts we know it belongs." (29) By putting literature back into the writing class, we give students a rich and valuable knowledge base. We give them unified texts to respond to, and a basis on which to respond.

Rather than assigning students exercises in writing, we can teach them to respond to a unified method of reading and making meaning of what they read. We will have to change the way we as teachers approach literature, dropping our reverential relationship to it, as Scholes puts it. We can assist in the evocation of a piece, which is the personal reaction of reader and text, rather than moving quickly to the teaching of the traditional critical baggage of graduate schools--genre, comparative themes, biographical concerns, or social analysis.(Rosenblatt 27) It may mean that teachers of literature may have to go back to the drawing boards and learn to become teachers of writing. Likewise, teachers of writing may learn to overcome their reluctance to use literary texts in class.

In effect, the first composition course should be an education in reading and writing. We can continue to teach the clarity/brevity/sincerity approach that often is its goal.(Lanham 13) We can integrate literature and writing by teaching them both as learning activities that foster communication and critical thinking skills.

Can teaching literature as a basis for writing assignments help? Would we rather correct and discuss papers based on real responses? Or to papers thrown together simply to please us, which allow the student to become "immunized" to the course? Can exposing our students to literature help? Do we think it would hurt?

How can we accomplish these objectives? We would not be alone in meeting them. One of the newest and fastest growing groups within the MLA, the traditional literary association, is the Division of the Teaching of Writing.

Since the '70s, a number of journals whose central concerns are the ones we are exploring today have been established. The articles in these journals offer case studies, lesson plans and overviews of research being done in this area.

Many of the responses to the ways in which reading and writing are taught have been based on research conducted during the past decade. Much of our concern with cultural literacy and critical thinking is a reaction to the 1983 study "A Nation at Risk." It is this constant reaction to the changing needs of those whom we teach that makes teaching the stimulating job some of it find it to be. Those of us who value literature, who do not want to see our students leave our institutions without an appreciation for it, will find ways to integrate literature and writing to help create a unified and coherent educational experience. We should re-examine the motives which led to the movement to separate language skills that in every way depend on each other. The motives are political, social, economic, philosophical and sexual.(Scholes 6) We will have to make changes in our departments, in our programs and curricula, and in our classes, for that is where our own future lies.

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Is There Life Before Literature?

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> When the stuff comes alive and turns crazy on you, a writer had better be in pretty good shape, with good legs and a counter-punch and be ready to fight like hell to the bloody end.
>
> (Ernest Hemingway)

One of the problems any literature instructor faces is how to take the driving energy underlying the Hemingway quote and use it in a course in such a way that a student enjoys the selections in the course, and also, on his own, seeks out, reads, and enjoys other works of literature.

For Hemingway--and most authors--writing was a struggle for the perfect words to form images that reach inside the reader...that touch some spot where the memories of a work will forever remain strong and valuable.

Too often, though, a literature course deteriorates into a series of required readings, with some supporting critical studies. Such studies are designed either to offer insights into understanding a given work or serve as guides for self-study by the unique--and rare--motivated student. Most students, though, see literature as something that must be suffered through, for the required term, but quickly to be forgotten when the course ends.

This student attitude is caused by several factors. We often elevate literature into works of Art that are above our poor existences as mere mortals; only an elite group can fully understand what a writer was attempting to say in the work.

Emerson was correct, though, when he said that the purpose of Great Works of Art is to reinforce our own good sense.

Negative student attitudes toward literature may also occur from an instructor who manages to kill the excitement contained in a play or novel, leaving only the words--the end results of a writer's creative efforts--to work with. This is not denying that the finished work has value; obviously, it does. It is the substance of the course and part of our cultural traditions.

A student needs something more, though, than a label such as a Classic American Novel or a Masterwork of World Literature or a Nobel Prize Winner to draw him into a course; titles, alone, won't sustain and expand his interests in literature. He needs a sense of the power and drive, of the frustrations and joys that make up the writer's creative efforts.

Several solutions are possible for doing this, and for, then, fighting the low interest and the decline in the number and variety of offerings in our literature departments. One possible answer is to draw upon common experiences that a student and a writer might share. With the exception of those relatively few students who write poetry, plays, or short stories, most students have no such common experience. To draw connections between a student's meager efforts at writing free verse for a journal or diary and those of a major writer may prove meaningless.

Another possibility is to develop a form of role playing in which a student experiences critical periods in a writer's life. Through the use of simulation or role playing, the student can attempt to understand the forces that affected a writer as he created a specific work. Such simulation can include everything from the early days of struggling as a beginning writer, through the various jobs that a writer needs to make ends meet while refining his skills, to the long-desired literary success. With the availability of low-cost, personal computers and word processors, such a technique is a practical and unique approach to literature for the innovative instructor and student. The student becomes the writer, sharing the joys and the frustrations, and ultimate successes that any writer experiences.

A third possibility is for the instructor to share, with a

student, the forces that help a writer create a work. The student can, then, use that information to enter into a particular work of literature, viewing it as a living, organic whole. Herman Melville described part of this process, while he was working on Moby Dick. In a letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, dated June 17, 1851, he wrote:

> But I was talking about the "Whale." As the fishermen say, "he was in his furry" when I left him some three weeks ago. I'm going to take him by his jaw, however, before long, and finish him up in some fashion or other. What's the use of elaborating what, in its very essence, is so short-lived as a modern book?

Melville touched on two related issues for a literature instructor: the force to create that drives a writer to work at a piece until completed and the awareness that a work may have only a temporary importance to the public; yet, the work and its process of creation are worth being examined by a student. It didn't matter that during his lifetime Melville saw less than two-thousand copies of Moby Dick in print; the all-consuming creative process that drove him to complete the work is the focal point here.

The problem for the teacher is somehow to take the underlying force that guided and shaped Melville's--and any other writer's--efforts and make it real for the student.

A solution I use in some of my classes is to directly involve a student in the creative process. I treat the student as a writer and encourage him to create an original work.

One of my courses--Art and the Creative Experience--has the student working in seven disciplines of the Fine and Performing Arts (Creative Writing, Theatre, Media, 2-D Art, 3-D Art, Music, and Dance). I have the students work in small teams (4-7 members) and write an original one-act play. The students, then, produce that play in the college theatre, selecting appropriate sets, props, costumes, lighting plots, and special effects for their plays. After the initial production, the play is then videotaped as a permanent record of their creative efforts.

In writing the play, the students are encouraged to develop their own plots, characters, and dialogue; then they draft the play, selecting appropriate stage directions and stage "business." After two weeks of writing the play, the students spend the following two weeks producing it, using members of their group as actors, producer, director, and other necessary personnel. The students are totally involved in the creative process; they have the opportunity to understand what the writer goes through in creating a play and what the other theatre peronnel experience in making the lines come to life on stage. In other words, they have a rare opportunity to be part of the entire process of creativity, from initial idea to the audience reaction with the performance of a play.

By entering into the creative process, the student gains a completely different insight into literature than what might normally happen in a typical lecture course, with its often one-way format. More important for the student, the process of creating a play allows him to experience the forces that interact to make a play--and by extension any other work of literature--succeed. He is the writer--his own Neil Simon or Ernest Hemingway or Herman Melville--and he can relate to why and how a work came to be.

Unfortunately, not all courses have the freedom of such total student involvement. But, each course can allow the student to taste some of the processes involved in creating literature.

In another course I teach--Humanities: The Good Life (an introduction the Humanities)--I give students the opportunity for a hands-on experience in creating a variety of materials. Among many possible topics, they may write their own plays, act in those of other students, design their own visions of a utopian world, re-create significant moments in history, or write an investigative paper exploring the forces that helped create a specific work of literature. This interdisciplinary course, focusing on four major areas--history, literature, art, and philosophy--includes a variety of primary source materials. The students read, for example, Death of a Salesman; by writing a play, as a term project, the students can better understand some of the unique problems Arthur Miller faced, when writing his play. The student can also begin to see that the play--or any other work--didn't suddenly appear in my class reading list, without any background to it. Instead, they

realize that the text they hold in their hands was the result of a series of frustrations and pleasures, false starts and clear visions from Miller to his audence or reader.

My idea of using the one-act play to introduce a student to literature forces him to create, to experience the process that the writers being read in the course also experienced. We may not create new Norman Mailers or Ernest Hemingways or Neil Simons.... That is not the purpose of a course in literature. But, we have an obligation to help a student see literature as something viable and worth studying for its own sake, as well as for a lifetime of personal pleasure. Writing a poem or play or story can help change a student's perceptions of Literature.

John Updike, when asked, before a Festival of the Arts audience, at Adelaide, South Australia, in 1974, why he writes, said:

> "The little tyrant's delight in wielding a pencil always carried with it an empathy into the condition of being a pencil; more and more the writer thinks of himself as an instrument, a means whereby a time and place make their mark. To become less and transmit more, to replenish energy with wisdom--some such hope, at this more than midpoint of my life, is the reason why I write.

If we can take that inner belief, that drive and force of Updike's, and allow a student to experience something similar, we might well find ourselves working with students who enjoy our classes and who seek out more. But, if we don't work to explore alternatives to teaching literature--and perhaps give up part or many of our traditional ways of working with the course content--we may find ourselves doing little more than teaching introductory survey courses that are required for degrees. The advanced courses and seminars will become things of the past and we may find ourselves facing a cultural wasteland...and that is something awful to think about...

Our students deserve all we can do to help them experience the range of possibilities and insights and values found in our

literature. That is what we are expected to do...and that is what this conference is offering...alternatives for helping students make their lives a little better...a little richer...through experiencing a play or a novel, a poem or a story, in ways that reach inside and touch them, hopefully, forever.

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King Arthur in Basic Writing

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Basic writing courses rarely use literature. Many instructors at my college do not even use a textbook, let alone the traditional reader or even a collection of short stories. Literature has fallen from composition and rarely been included in basic writing for good reasons. First, there is so much to do in these courses that assigning reading often just confounds the job of getting students involved in the course. Second, students often can not stand what we call literature so it is easier not to wrestle with them than it is to help them become involved with the texts we value, especially in a course where the prime focus is on their writing ability, not the writing of others. Third, when literature is used in a writing course, it is often used as a static model of one rhetorical mode or another or as a spring board to writing. These disjointed assignments, sometimes loosely held together by a common theme, give students the impression that literature is a sort of electrical shock to their writing apparatus that will get them thinking about topics for writing. They never seem to value the literary work by placing it in a meaningful context.

We know, however, that literary texts bring rich evocative language into the classroom that we can use to promote meaningful writing from our students. We know from the work of I.A. Richards and Louise Rosenblat that our reading of a literary work is filtered through what George Kelly calls our personal construct system so that once students are engaged by a literary text it can become a source of reflection and an opportunity to acquire increased self awareness as well as knowledge about the text and the world. But, just putting a student and a short story or even a novel together will usually not produce reflective writing because students often stand across a great gap from the world continued in the story. As instructors, we need to help our students bridge the gap; we need to help them make connections between the world of the text and their own experiences, values, and concerns.

The first thing that instructors can do to bridge the gap between the text and the reader so that students write in response to the literary work is to select books that explore issues and concerns that are important to students. Over the last six to eight years, my students have responded strongly to books that explore the heroic life. Books that ask the question: What does it mean to be a hero? My experience indicates that a single text by one author rather than a collection of essays or short stories on one theme plays better because students prefer to delve deeply into the work of one writer than to skim through what many have had to say on one topic.

Le Morte D'Arthur has survived a test of time. Even though it creates a world distant from students' experiences, it deals with fundamental human concerns by creating a rich society struggling toward maturity. While students often have difficulty understanding the actual events, the emotional contours of the stories often parallel the spirit of student experience. Chapters are short and the language, although antiquated, is a natural language that is not especially stilted or flowered. Arthur is also a flawed book, which gives students the immediate impression that writing is a difficult process that requires work, not magic produced by a Merlin with a pen. For example, within the first chapter students come upon lists of the names of knights and kings. They always want to know if they will be tested on the names and why Malory put them all there. The explanation that Malory was learning to write and that he thought such lists would help give the book some sense of realism helps me accentuate the need for detail in their writing. It also shows them that detail must be meaningful because Malory's detail only confuses.

But just assigning even the most interesting book will have only limited success in enhancing the role of literature in the writing course and stimulating reflective writing. To help students discover topics suitable for writing, I usually ask questions intended to help the student understand that s/he faces similar situations as portrayed in the text. To foster this I usually use language from the text that is emblematic of larger issues or that sets in motion a series of events that will greatly influence a character to shape a question. For example, the question "When have you pulled a sword from a stone?" usually encourages the stu-

dent to realize that that one moment was both a test of Arthur and the impetus to self discovery. "When have you met a Merlin?" is intended to encourage students to think about the relationship between Arthur and Merlin by writing about people whom they have met who have acted as a Merlin. "When have you battled only to withdraw?" helps students better understand the wisdom that Arthur showed when he trusted Merlin's advice and withdrew from a battle that he seemed certain to win if he just pressed on. Like the literary events from which they are drawn, these questions are frequently open to alternative interpretation so that while two or three students might be working on the same question they will probably come at the question from differing points of view.

Students often, therefore, respond to these questions by modifying the topics to meet their own needs. "When have you battled only to withdraw?" provides a useful example. In Malory's story, Arthur has been battling the eleven kings who contest his right to the throne. While his forces have killed 45,000 of the 60,000 soldiers of the enemy he has not yet been able to overthrow them. Merlin, realizing that Arthur will later need the support of these kings, says "You will not overcome the eleven kings today, and I warn you that if you resume the battle it will turn in their favor. So have done!" "I prophesy that for three years these kings will not trouble you." Arthur follows this advice. Peace follows.

Rick and Mary Ellen, two students in my basic writing courses, responded differently to this question and both diverged from the literary context to personalize their response. Mary Ellen, writing about the time that she withdrew from her mother's home, came to realize while she was fending off her mother's knife attack that there was no "sense in trying so I gave up the knife and ran out of the house. That was my battle and I had to withdraw because I only would have been killed." While she withdraws from battle to go in search of a new home, Arthur withdraws to solidify his kingdom. Mary Ellen sees the implications of continuing to fight: Arthur needs someone else to point out the implication of continuing to fight. Perhaps the most significant change Mary Ellen made in her handling of the question was that she told of an experience that seemed to start an episode of her life, for she went on to tell of her search for a new home. Malory seemed to use the battle with the 11 kings to bring the fighting episode of Arthur's assumption of the mantle of power to closure.

Rick, like Malory, seemed to see the battle as an event bringing closure when he wrote of the last arguement he had with his girlfriend before they broke up. His unnamed girlfriend "was beautiful and very special to me," but when he began to doubt her fidelity to him a year of intermittent fighting began. After the first skirmish where he accused her of cheating on him and she denied any wrongdoing, he decided "that I would let her get away with it." But the tacit treaty was broken again. He realized that this woman who cared for him was not going to date only him. So he withdrew "neither a winner or a loser." However, Rick seemed to draw a different conclusion than Malory implies when he says "But I'll never give in to anyone. . . I'll simply withdraw" as though withdrawing means giving up the kingdom. Malory seems to be saying that sometimes withdrawing is the way to assure the kingdom.

As a writing instructor using literature to evoke personal writing, my response to essays such as Mary Ellen's and Rick's must meet two aims. First, I want to encourage further writing, and second, I want to encourage further thought about the literary text. Usually these two aims are accomplished by asking the writer questions about the content of the paper. For example, in response to Mary Ellen's essay, I wrote: "Arthur seems to bring the episode where he assumes power to a close with his decision to withdraw from battle. You seem to start a new phase of life when you leave home. What brought you to this point and where did you go once you left home?" Asking these two questions, I hoped to help Mary Ellen see that Arthur's withdrawal was not an isolated incident as she seemed to portray the attack from her mother. In a paper titled "What made My Mother so Hyper?" she made it clear that she knew that neither her withdrawal nor Arthur's were isolated acts when she explained that her mother often "flipped her lid" if the house was not kept clean. Her sister Ann and she "would go to bed starving at night. . .Our behinds would be beat red, because of the strap. Then again, Ann and I thought this was normal to have our mother react in this manner."

This explication of the events leading up to her flight from home also makes it clearer that Mary Ellen somewhere along the line realized that continuing to accept her mother's abuse was not the best course of action. That is, Mary Ellen, like Arthur, came to know that allowing events to continue as they were going would lead to disaster. If Arthur continued to battle, Merlin promised

he would lose. If Mary Ellen continued to battle she will lose when she injures another or when she is injured. However, Mary Ellen did not make the origin of this new knowledge explicit as Malory did when Merlin told Arthur to withdraw. Even when she wrote about trying to help her sister Ann leave home (that is, when she acted as Merlin), she seems uncertain about the reasons for leaving. She knows only that her sister "never had the courage to leave" and by implication that she did have the courage. Writing about these events in this way helped Mary Ellen better understand the trust that Arthur put in Merlin and the literary reason for the prophesy: it explained Arthur's motivation.

Le Morte D'Arthur, like most literary works, not only helps students explore situations, but also helps them better understand relationships. Asking students to write in response to relationships or motifs in a literary work often encourages a series of papers rather than just one telling of a parallel situation. When asked to write about a time he withdrew, Dan saw the opportunity to write about a mentor, a Merlin. Much like a king raised away from court, Dan felt like an outsider looking in. When his friends went off to college, he saw that the general direction of their life was set, but he had no idea what to do with his life. So he asked Colonel James Papas, a neighbor who had known him for 12 years and who "knew how to handle and observe people very well," for advice. Papas first advised Dan to get a job as an automotive mechanic and when he outgrew that position two years later advised him to study computers at the local community college.

While Dan sought this advice, he wanted independence from his mentor so that when Papas seemed to handle Dan too closely, Dan sought greater independence just as Arthur rebuked Merlin for interfering in his fight with King Pellinore by casting a spell.

Because Dan seemed to respond so strongly to the idea of a mentor, I asked him if others had helped him "fit into society"; if others had supported him as Launcelot and Gwynevere, Gawain and others had Arthur. Dan wrote about how Barbara, his girlfriend, helped him act on his decision to go to college and how his parents failed to treat him as the adult he felt he was. Thus, he provided an example of someone supporting him and of someone failing to support him.

The case might be made that writing of this sort could be stimulated without using literary texts. That might be true but the class would not have as rich a texture as the one where literature provoked writing. Students would not have a respected model for reference and all conversation about the writing would be focused on the student's work per se, not on the student's work as a response to literature. In short, the literature provides a slightly removed common context for discussion about shared concerns.

Some might argue that this sort of approach forgets the literary work, a concern I shared until I realized that some students wanted to explore Arthur more specifically. That is, having written two or three papers examining their own experience in response to the literary work, many students chose to turn their attention to the literary work. For example, Georgia, who had written about difficulties with her boyfriends wrote about the relationship between Arthur and Gwynevere. Other students who had written about love produced papers that explored Tristram and Iseult or Launcelot and Gwynevere. Still others such as Dan went on to explore the mentor relationships in the book (Arthur and Merlin, Tristram and King Mark, Sir Kay and Sir Launcelot) and even did some limited reading about mentoring relationships.

This sort of sequence, where students first explore the literary work as it personally relates to them, and then move on to examine how the text handles a specific concern, and finally on occasion reading what others have written about that concern is one of the roles I want literature to play. It helps confirm to students the inherent dignity of experience and the vital part language plays in expressing, representing, and understanding our lives.

Literature Courses in the Community College: Some Strategies for Survival

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On the surface (which usually means upon the pages of the yearly catalogues), the community college appears to represent the ultimate in curricular flexibility. Students of varying ages and with diverse ambitions and goals may pursue associate degrees in professional fields ranging from fire technology to French language and culture; they may earn certificates to practice in such vocational areas as dental technology, diesel mechanics, farm management, or police science; they may study, at their leisure or as parts of structured programs, robotics, stenography, nursing ethics, mechanical drawing, world civilization, business letter writing, or even contemporary British literature. Beneath the surface, however, in a state of Miltonic "darkness visible," lies a variety of rigid academic, professional, and vocational curricula that cling, steadfastly and inflexibly,to equally varied claims of internal and external requirements. In the simplest of terms, faculty within the hard and soft sciences, the industrial and mechanical arts, the health professions and vocations, the criminal and social justices seem extremely hesitant to allow their students to wander outside the boundaries of their own programs; those same faculty work terribly hard to limit general education (especially in the liberal arts) hours to the bare minimum--unless told to do so by enlightened administrators or boards of trustees. As a result, the liberal arts--foreign languages, literature, art, music, history, philosophy--scramble over, under, and around the curricular dinner table after the scraps left to them by their more "relevant" brothers and sisters. Unable to compete reasonably with one another for their reasonable portion of the enrollment pie, faculties in the liberal arts waste considerable time and energy concocting not always useful recruiting and marketing elixers in attempts to keep afloat their elective courses and, in certain disciplines, their very positions within the community college academy.

In community college English departments, the so-called "numbers game" does not appear to create a serious problem. Indeed, as long as requirements for composition, communications, or business and technical writing courses hold fast to programs in the professions and vocations (and nothing seems to indicate an immediate lessening of activity in those areas), English faculty will have enough students and enough work to keep their eyes and fingers busy and their names on the payroll! However, if English instructors at community colleges can stop their paper reading long enough to view their discipline within the boundaries of its origins and its traditions, as the study of literature, and if those same English instructors can find the time to recall, as they ought to recall, that literature contributes to the general education of each and every citizen, then there exists a very real confrontation between the idealism of intellectual purity and the realism of practical drudgery. Nonetheless, the issue at this point focuses upon the dual need to preserve the discipline and, at the same time, maintain the rights of English faculty to teach their discipline in the community college, sociologists teach sociology, historians teach history, mathematicians teach mathematics, biologists teach biology; in the community college, faculty with advanced degrees in American and British literatures teach composition. If such an outcry appears as a form of complaining, so be it; but such an outcry ought also to be interpreted as a call for a return to intellectual consistency and academic respectability.

The present course for community college English departments toward the preservation of literature offerings follows competitive if not combatative paths. In meetings of committees, sub-committees, departments, and divisions, faculties engage in shouting exhibitions and in petty political trade-offs for those previously mentioned morsels fallen from the general education supper table. Year after year, English faculty continue to push forward the idealistic but nevertheless valid arguments for expanding literature offerings and for instituting literature requirements. Those same faculty members continue to advance the equally valid argument that (to paraphrase Matthew Arnold) literature contains all of the materials which force all of us to know ourselves and our world. Those same arguments, however, tend to lose themselves amid the din

of similar sets of reasonable ideas advanced by the departments of foreign languages, history, art, music, philosophy, and theatre.

After the talking and the screaming, after the failure to resolve or to accomplish, the English department chair confronts the schedule for the term and continues to offer five, six, even seven literature courses; the students refuse the offer; the dean clamors for the cancellation of three, four, or five of those courses because of small enrollments; the chair negotiates and even begs for continuance of two or three marginal or "gimmicky" sections of courses thinly disguised as literature offerings, hoping and even praying that at least one of them will attract a reasonable number of students, thus easing the load and raising the morale of at least one or two faculty. Meanwhile, the remainder of the English faculty awaits the dawn of a new day, a day when students finally awake to the values from studying literature. Unfortunately, passivity benefits only those who aspire to sainthood. English faculty continue to seethe in the heat of their own frustration and anger because they cannot teach literature. They continue to wade through the mire of their own discontent, expending more time and labor toward maintaining their niches on rotation schedules for teaching literature courses that never materialize. They devote less time and concentration upon the art and the substance of what they have come to know, to appreciate, and to communicate to and dicuss with their students--the discipline of literature.

Should community college English faculty wish to divert from the present course and seek to stabilize and solidify offerings in literature, at least four opportunies for their students and for themselves do exist:

1. Revision of the composition program

2. Restriction of literature course offerings

3. Placement of literature courses away from the main campus

4. Cooperation with secondary school English departments

Essentially, English departments at community colleges must be prepared to close their doors and windows, ignore and protect themselves from the political manipulations swirling about the tables of curriculum committee meetings, and settle their own problems by and for themselves and for their students.

First, the true strength of each and every community college English department lies immediately beneath its proverbial nose--in freshman English programs or in communications sequences through which the vast majority of community college students eventually pass. Although traditionally and pricipally a writing program (and a program that that must and will continue to emphasize written expression), freshman English can easily and reasonably be recast to create a sensible balance between writing and literature and to promote not merely writing or not merely literature, but to introduce students to a thoughtful and stimulating combination of the two--writing ABOUT literature. Such a program serves to underscore the English faculty's major responsibility: if composition logically belongs within the responsibilities of an English department, then the composition course logically requires the substance and the methodology that constitutes the discipline we all know as English--namely literature. And, for the sake of clarity, recognition, definition, and the identification of my own position, I would now and here set belles lettres distinctly apart from general or popular writing, in much the same manner as any graduate student would separate the individual and collected works of Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Goldsmith, Wordsworth, Arnold, Eliot, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, et al. from the likes of Nancy Bubel's "How To Make a Terarium," P.S. Wood's "Female Athletes: They've Come a Long Way, Baby," John McMurtry's "Kill Em, Crush 'Em! Eat 'Em Raw!" Jeffrey Z. Rubin's "Psychological Traps," Lisa Talbot's "Much Ado about Cooking," or Russell Baker's "The Plot against People" (Eschholz and Rosa). I would further state, for clarification of my own position, that while the latter group of writers may indeed arouse the interests and emotions of certain students, the former causes them to think upon a higher intellectual plain--which, after all, appears to be the purpose and function of our discipline, no matter at what level we teach it.

At any rate, the literature-composition program focuses upon the notion that the text--the poem, play, short story, novel, nonfiction prose essay--plus the students' reactions to and observations of that text constitute the basis for written

expression and communication. Such an approach trains students to read carefully and critically, to think toward solutions to or resolutions of problems arising from or suggested by that reading, and to develop and arrange and express those thoughts on paper. Further, the text proves the substance from which the student-writer communicates a clear, specific essay idea to an equally clear and specific audience. The program supports the notion that such modes as classification, definition, comparison, contrast, cause and effect, and various combinations thereof remain the principal order of the day, in addition to instruction in the more elementary and developmental aspects of composition--pre-writing, planning, sentence patterns, sentence combination, and language convention. The literary selections--the reading, explication, and analyses of--provide the actual substance of the program; they form the ideas and the content for student essays, the material that introduces students to more advanced and concentrated courses in the discipline.

From a different point of view, there appears little sense for instructors trained in and dedicated to the discipline of literature and in the methods and materials with which to explore serious works of literature to spend time with their critical fingers stuck in someone else's cookie jar. For example, the editors of one recent but honored anthology for freshman composition classes, after suggesting that the instructors serve to students a piece entitled "The Black and White Truth about Basketball," by the television commentator and media analyst Jeff Greenfield, propose that those same students "Compare and contrast college basketball and professional basketball (or, for a narrower subject, a college team and a pro team)": should the students prove unwilling to gorge themselves on such a topic, they may then "Write a brief essay in which you compare and contrast the styles of any two athletes who play the same game" (Kennedy and Kennedy, 199). The editors of another rhetoric reader offer students Marie Winn's essay, "Television and Family Life," then ask them to "Write an essay in which you discuss the effects of television on you or on American society. You may wish to focus on the specific influences of one of the following aspects of television: advertising, sports broadcasts, cultural programming, talk shows, national or international news, children's programming, educational television, situation comedies. You may also wish to argue against Marie Winn's view-

point and discuss the positive effects of selective television viewing on children and the family." (Eschholz and Rosa, 411-412) Certainly the three essay topics go forward upon legitimate rhetorical vehicles--comparison, contrast, cause and effect; however, neither the selections nor the essays resulting from students' reactions to their content belong on the desks of college instructors with earned graduate degrees in American, British, or comparative literatures. The profession has recently devoted so much time and energy to promoting the privileges of students to read what they please and when they please, as well as writing what comes most quickly and easily to their minds, that the instructor's total role in the total composition process has been neglected, if not entirely negated. The English instructor's function as teacher and critic has been pushed aside in favor of him or her serving as proofreader of anything that students write.

Simply, if English instructors at community colleges must teach composition (and few colleagues in other disciplines have seen fit to challenge their responsibility and competence to do so), if English instructors at community colleges must promote and maintain a literature program beyond the freshman level in order to protect the integrity of the entire concept of general and liberal education, then the moment to begin the teaching of literature is, indeed, at the beginning. Let the sports historians and the sociologists come to grips with the comparisons and contrasts of Jeff Greenfield; let the professional communicators adjudicate students' analyses of television advertising and telvision talk shows. Frankly, such exercises on the parts of faculty in those disciplines and students in those courses will accomplish considerable to advance the ideals and the practices of cross-curricular writing programs. For the English faculty and the freshman English program, however, there exists sufficient intellectual nutrition in the fiction of Hemingway, the poetry of Frost, the drama of Miller, and the prose nonfiction of Emerson. The most elementary explication of the devil's sermon in "Young Goodman Brown," the most superficial analysis of the arrangement of events and parts in "A Rose for Emily," the most general causal analysis of Marlowe's choices in Heart of Darkness, the most obvious contrasts of tone and language between "Fra Lippo Lippi" and "My Last Duchess"--all contain more substance and possess more merit than the definition of a fascist, a contrast between Reaganomics and the New Deal, the causes and results of overpopulation. All prove more beneficial in guiding students toward the advancement of new knowledge, of new

skills, of new disciplines--which, after all, appears to be a principal purpose of post-secondary education. "...let everyone be assured," declared Thomas De Quincy in the conclusion to his discussion on the literature of knowledge and the literature of power, "that he owes to the impassioned books which he has read many a thousand more of emotions than he can consciously trace back to them. Dim by their origination, these emotions yet rise in him, and mould him through life, like forgotten incidents of his childhood." (De Quincey, 505)

Second, community college English departments must learn to identify the function and the purpose of their total course offerings in literature. Essentially, the faculty of those departments need to exercise reasonable control over those offerings, realizing that they cannot and should not offer everything for everyone in the attempt to please the palate of each student. Rather, faculty in English must again look to their strengths and concentrate upon what they do best at the community college level: train students in the foundations of literature and prepare those who desire to continue the study of literature at four-year institutions. Therefore, instead of offering a broad range and a large number of literature courses (for instance science fiction, detective and mystery fiction, Shakespeare and other figure courses, mythology, folklore, the Bible, dramatic literature, the literature of film, Black and/or general ethnic literature, literature and psychology), community college English departments should confine their offerings to as many sections as necessary of no more than two courses each of British, American, and Western world literatures. The freshman English program--a two semester sequence--will provide a general introduction to the study of and the writing about literature, while at the same time allowing students to survey the major literary genres--fiction, poetry, drama, and prose nonfiction. The traditional survey courses in American, British, and world literatures will, in turn, introduce sophomores to the essential historical-cultural-literary periods necessary for the study of upper division undergraduate literature courses. For those not planning to study literature beyond the sophomore level, the traditional American-British-world literature survey courses serve as equally traditional contributors to their liberal education. Again, community college English departments must remember to guard against unnecessary competition of courses within the department,

and at the same time they must see clearly the boundary separating the community college from the four-year university.

If the literature segment of the freshman English program fortifies itself with sufficient but reasonable flexibility, those faculty who hunger to teach their special interests may achieve the professional and academic rights that have always been their due. For example, the first semester of that program introduces students to equal measures of the four literary genres; in other words, a general introduction to literature serves as the basis for writing. In the second semester, then, the students read (also as a basis for their writing) one writer in depth from each literary genre: let us say Orwell as essayist, Miller as dramatist, Yeats as poet, Hemingway as novelist/short fiction writer. If the department allows, in the second semester, each faculty member to select the writers of his or her choice, and, especially, if those writers come from a department-approved list, then the desires and the interests of faculty can, in part, be met, resulting in the faculty member communicating to the students a sense of personal interest and enthusiasm for the text. Why, year after year and semester after semester, must community college English instructors beat the intellectual bushes with selections from John Train's "For the Adventurous Few: How To Get Rich," Milton Mayer's "A World without Government," or Germaine Greer's "The Stereotype," when Poe, Malamud, Goldsmith, and Paul Laurence Dunbar wait in the wings as representatives of what should actually comprise the substance of any course offered by a college English department? Of course additional means for balancing the teaching of literature with the teaching of composition exist, and the English faculty needs to force itself into a collegial agreement as to how the program will best serve the interests of students and instructors.

Third, community college English departments need to consider transporting their literature courses from the campus buildings to the outlying areas that community colleges tend to serve during the evenings and on the weekends. In so doing, the department will be expanding its clientele, exposing more and different types of students to the study of literature. This does not mean designing special and diluted offerings as literature for plumbers, literature and business, or literature for the working mother; to the contrary, the so-termed "nontraditional student" needs, and has

a right to, as much of the true discipline of literary study as does the so called "traditional" freshman or sophomore. There exists a tendency in the community college to protect elective literature courses, or at least to save them for the best time slots during the day and to offer them on the main campus. Unfortunately, other humanities departments caught in the same struggle over numbers--philosophy and foreign languages immediately come to mind--cling to the same tendency, with the result that humanities courses in general become early victims to the low enrollment cancellation axe. The students, who also tend toward prime time, will elect the easiest path, which means those courses within the general education menu that require little reading, less writing, and almost no thought or imagination. Essentially, the writing about literature freshman English program and the historical surveys of literature courses need to become, regularly and consistently, principal offerings at off-campus extension centers.

Fourth, English faculty at the community college need to reopen the thoroughfares leading directly to their colleagues and counterparts in the secondary schools, to establish firmly what the professional educators long ago labeled as articulation. Perhaps the more accurate though more lengthy phrasing, for both parties, would be something like mutual respect on behalf of a common interest. No matter what the language, however, both groups must come to realize that they share common problems and common interests, that definition of those interests and solutions to those problems will certainly bring profit to all levels of English education. Simply, students graduating from those high schools within the community college district ought to come to the community college (or to any college or university, for that matter) with some idea of what to expect in and from the freshman English program. Yet, that sense of familiarity or understanding rarely exists, principally because their high school English teachers have little or no idea of what goes on in the community college English department in terms of course requirements and procedures, standards for evaluating student essays, reading and writing assignments, and general methodology for relating writing to literature. And, of course, the community college English faculty, unless they happen to have children in those schools, know even less about similar circumstances, procedures, and requirements in the classrooms of secondary school English teachers.

A number of all too obvious means for eliminating such chasms of ignorance do exist, and if we intend to salvage our discipline, then we had better be prepared to act. Unfortunately, such traditional exercises as meetings, visitations, exchanges of syllabi, seminars, workshops, et al. have produced little beyond the creation of superficial social amenities and stacks of minutes and position papers. The low state and status of the discipline require action, not conversation! Clearly, community college and secondary school English faculty need, first, to determine if indeed they do agree upon an English program for the college bound that balances literature and composition; if they do agree, then future discussions can go forth with clear purpose and direction--principally to write unified but still flexible programs and to prepare reading lists, writing assignments, and guidelines for the evaluation of student essays. Second, there need to be established an on-going series of faculty exchanges, one that allows the community college English instructor to gain at least some idea of the methods and the problems in high school English programs, while the secondary school English teacher also achieves knowledge and understanding from experiences with community college English classes. Such an exchange of faculty and transition within programs will not automatically assure that the student graduating from a district high school who enters the community college arrives with a knowledge of literature and a high level of writing competence. Nonetheless, the meeting of pedagogical minds will, at its minimum level of effect, eat away at all those barriers that have kept students away from college level literature courses. Eventually--and here, patience must be the byword-- the consistent experience, in the high school, of reading and analyzing works of literature, complemented with writing essays about literature, will instill within students the confidence that they can do the work; that they can both enjoy and succeed in courses that require them to read, to think, to write; that reading literature and then writing about it exist as important contributors to their overall educations. Who knows--there may come a time when society looks upon the Penguin classic and the Everyman Library edition with the same reverence as they now extend to those long, perforated, lime-green and off white sheets with the little holes on either side.

Riding firm upon the virtues of careful, thorough, and logical long-range planning, literature courses will slowly but steadily

resume their proper and rightful places within community college curricula. Community college English faculty must embark upon and maintain consistent policies concerning those offerings; the faculty must not panic and, as has been done in the past, sacrifice the quality of literature courses and compromise the standards required by their discipline. The faculty must not engage in petty squabbles about who will teach what, when, and where. The program in literature must be allowed to grow, which means that department chairs and college deans must practice tolerance. They must do away with unreasonable enrollment quotas for certain courses; they must permit large and multi-section programs (freshman English being the most obvious) to "carry" smaller offerings (literature courses being the most obvious). They must alter their own administrative values and priorities remembering, above everything else, that words and ideas through poetry and prose, not dollar bills and FTE tables, build minds and develop intellects.

One may, in the end, wish for specific answers, for concrete solutions to the ills, the problems, and the dilemmas currently confronting literature in the community college. One may wish, in the end, for a clear outline of what, in John Kennedy's emotional terms, literature can do for our students. The physics student may question the value of explicating poetry, the business management major the necessity for reading drama, the computer progammer the importance of understanding the literary history of England, the dental assistant the relevance of Middle English, the marketing major the purpose of prosody and prose rhythm. We certainly do live in an age of specialization, in an age of intellectual intolerance and overall academic lethargy. Nevertheless, the discipline of literature need not supply, at this late date of the twentieth century, answers to and defenses for its very existence. That obvious existence deserves respect and recognition for its own sake--for the sake of over 3000 years of Western world cultural history ranging from Genesis to Sappho, from Aristotle to Geoffrey Chaucer, from Francois Rabelais to John Milton, from Alexander Pope to Ralph Waldo Emerson, from Matthew Arnold to Mark Twain, from Luigi Pirandello to Harold Pinter.

The struggle of literature and literary study for academic and intellectual survival cannot be labeled a new or even recent campaign. The attempts by scholars and pedagogues and even publishers

to resolve the issues have remained historically consistent; the arguments appear terribly familiar. We can only conclude, therefore, that a significant number of us have refused to recognize the lessons of and from the past. In 1770, we all remember, Oliver Goldsmith surveyed his Deserted Village amid a period of relative "high technology" known as the Industrial Revolution and asked Poetry to "Aid slighted truth, with thy persuasive strain/Teach erring man to spurn the the rage of gain. . ." (Goldsmith, ll. 423-424) More than a century later, we remember, Matthew Arnold suggested to the world how students and scholars alike might practice what Goldsmith had poetically preached:

> When I speak of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity. . . as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, I mean more than a knowledge of so much vocabulary, so much grammar, so many portions of authors in the Greek and Latin languages, I mean knowing the Greeks and Romans, and their life and genius, and what they were and did in the world; what we get from them, and what is its value. That, at least, is the ideal; and when we talk of endeavouring to know Greek and Roman antiquity, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, we mean endeavouring to know them as to satisfy this ideal, however much we still fall short of it. (Arnold, 2:1470)

Thus, although literature courses in the community college will continue to struggle with the different values and even with the complex equipment that the world continues to place in their path, those courses and programs will, in Faulkner's term, endure. Specific areas of serious study and enlightened enjoyment have transcended time and people and people's values and people's machines because they have always been available--even for the few. Whenever and wherever all else has failed to provide the world with truth, knowledge, imagination, creativity, morality, and sanity, the poets and the philosophers and the dramatists and the essayists and the tellers of tales have been available.

Certainly, the ideal of which Arnold wrote may never be reached or achieved, but if we continue to encourage people to listen and to learn from the likes of Oliver Goldsmith and Matthew Arnold, we ought never to cease in our efforts to reach or to achieve. Should any of us require but one final note of encouragement to re-establish our discipline firmly upon the soil of academe, then let us

listen to the words of the poet Longfellow, words set to heart and mind and paper almost a century and a half ago:

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,

Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,

Given to redeem the human mind from error,

There were no need of arsenals or forts.

The warrior's name would be a name abhorred!

And every nation that would lift again

Its hand against a brother, on its forehead

Would wear forevermore the curse of Cain!

Down the dark future, through long generations,

The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease:

And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,

I hear once more the the voice of Christ say, "Peace!"

Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals

The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies!

But beautiful as songs of the immortals,

The holy melodies of love arise.

(Longfellow, 1:1666)

Those words and those lines provide all of the arguments we need to continue in our struggle to promote and to provide our discipline; ours is a struggle for the survival of ourselves as members of a scholarly profession, of our discipline as an intellectual necessity, of our students as our legacy of imaginative, creative thought unto future generations.

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128

The Use of Literature in the Teaching of Writing to Key Non-Traditional Students at Community Colleges

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Summary

While the outcome for developmental, or weaker, students taking freshman English composition is similar to that facing regular college students, namely: to read with comprehension and to write intelligibly, the backgrounds brought to the tasks by developmental students may be quite different. Developmental students are those most likely to say: "I've never read a book." "I hate to read." "I can't write." "I don't know what to write about." They are also the students most likely to avoid their reading and writing assignments. They postpone, procrastinate, come to class with the assigned reading not done. It can play havoc with a plan for a class discussion!

If the instructor selects readings brief enough, they can be completed in perhaps 20 minutes of class time. So the reading does get done. The selections chosen are by writers of differing ethnic backgrounds: Sherwood Anderson, Maya Angelou, Saul Bellow, Eldridge Cleaver, Helen Keller, Adrienne Rich, Elie Wiesel. So experience is broadened. Essays tend to be briefer and better organized than short stories, and so are easier to deal with during class time.

Following the silent reading period, there is time for students to ask questions: "What is a kibbutz?" "A moor?" "An ethnic ghetto?" and for a discussion of the main ideas, the inferences, the theme of the selection. Finally, the students are asked to write, sometimes a summary of the whole, sometimes a clarification of a single line in the essay. The writing is submitted for correction but not for grading.

The arrangement of selections in the text into the categories of people, places, events, philosophies, is carried over into the

subsequent writing assignments for students. After having read and written on the writings of four or more authors about people, students have ample models for their own "description of a person" essay.

Using Literature as a Resource for Teaching Composition

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It is now clear. This conference should have been held a hundred years earlier. How can we, who pride ourselves as humanists and prognosticators, have been so asleep? In 1973 my department offered over twenty-one courses in literature. This semester, Fall 1985, we could only offer three. And it's taken us twelve years to see the writing on the wall. But the writing isn't on the wall any more. The wall isn't even there. Can we ever build it again?

How did we get here? Many find the culprit in TV. But TV is a superficial cause. The true causes are to be found in the currents of positivism and liberalism still powerfully swirling in the milieu from which our students come. By liberalism I mean the fondness for locating the ills of mankind in the organization of society and not in the darkness in the human heart; and by positivism I mean that only "truth" derived by the scientific method is to be taken seriously and all other insights and ideas are to be dismissed as superstition. These prejudices have led to an overwhelming materialism, with its attendant motives of expediency, which leaves our students and many of our colleagues unaware of or disdainful toward the notion of value in literature. Such people assume, albeit unconsciously perhaps, that literature, and all the arts, are superstitious nonsense at best, and contain only mere emotion. They are embarrassing vehicles of escape from the real, positivist, technological world.

These are some of the assumptions that underlie the current disdain for literature. We can find some of the most confirmed skeptics among colleagues in our own discipline of literature. I recall one colleague making a disparaging reference to the import in Faulkner's Nobel Prize acceptance speech. I recently taught an essay written by a scientist who was trying to understand a poem and concluded after much effort that it was just an expression of an emotion. He made it clear that once he discovered that about the

poem it no longer interested him. I once heard another colleague in our discipline deride Shelley's dictum: "Poets (Today we would use artists.) are the unacknowledged legislators of mankind." If our predecessors and our colleagues and we ourselves had remembered the truth in this statement of Shelley's, we would not be in the desperate state we find ourselves in today. We should expound on Shelley's statement in every one of our classes. We should put it in our bedroom. It should be the last thing we see when we go to bed and the first thing we see when we arise in the morning. Maybe that way we could begin to rebuild the wall again.

If the wall can be re-erected, we must bear down hard on maintaining a rigorous and sharply delineated distinction between literature of escape and literature of engagement. We used to call literature of engagement "serious literature." But present use of such a phrase simply identifies us as an anachronism in the minds of our students. Let's see if a phrase such as "literature of engagement" might not open their minds again.

So we can't teach literature classes anymore. But we English teachers do have almost every student who matriculates in the United States in a composition class. We have a very potent forum before which to lay our case. I have used works of literature as resources for concrete material to support theses in student essays for the past four or five years. I am confident that very few students have left my classes without the discovery, astonishing to them, of the engaging and enlightening properties of great literature. But what can be said to our colleagues who insist that an anthology of essays must be used because our students need good prose models? To that I say, "What is good about them? How can they serve as models?" Most of the essays I have taught--I would say at least ninety percent--are very poor models. They are poorly organized; their writers fail to make their abstractions concrete; they digress with abandon, especially the more famous of them, and they have hidden (unknown) theses, or a thesis at variance with the stated thesis and which is absurd once it is unearthed. Sometimes I haven't arrived at the true thesis until after I have embarrassed myself by misleading two or three classes. The worst thing I can say about most of the essays I have taught is that they are so vague or abstract that by the time I have worked out a clear understanding of their meaning they have become soporific. They are energy absorbers instead of energy generators.

The opposite is true of works of literature. They energize the teacher and the class. They engage the whole range of mind; the con- crete nature of metaphor and symbol persistently teases the mind to explore abstract implications. The graphic concreteness serves as an anchor for the mind to return to so as to check out its speculations concerning the extended meaning inherent in the metaphor. Since the whole range of mind--the cognitive as well as the affective--is involved, great energy is generated.

Words used in literature have much more energy than those used in discursive prose. They are more evocative and graphic; they embrace a wider range of meaning; and they require a fuller range of mind, both cognitive and affective, to grasp and respond to them. To handle literature responsibly requires greater effort, discipline, and patience from student and teacher alike. Students get very demanding practice in paraphrase, summary, interpreting, inferenc- ing, generalizing, and synthesizing.

Furthermore, the use of literature rather than essays is preferable because literary works are generally written by authors who devote their lives entirely to the effective use of words, whereas essays are generally written by somebody about his life's work. Put in other words, stories, plays, and poems in first class anthologies are written by "world-class" authors whose life work is to write as well as they can. Writing is their first love. Essays are mostly written by dilettantes whose primary profession is something else. They are more interested in content than technique and are often slovenly in attention to precision and decorum.

But the use of literature instead of essays does present its own problems. Let us be candid about this. Even our colleagues who agree with us often believe that literature should be studied as literature and not for meaning. We can be objective about conflict, character, and point of view, but they say that truth is relative and we must not indoctrinate our students. I believe we can also be objective, or at least fair, about meaning if we do it right. I use the concrete situations in works of literature to illustrate mean- ings in the abstract words we use. The words exist. How can we understand them better? Thus in the third paper in my second semester composition course I require my students to look into four pieces of literature for what insights they offer regarding material and spiritual values. The four pieces of literature are

Antigone, A Doll's House, "Bartleby, the Scrivener," and Wright's "The Man Who Lived Underground." These four pieces offer a very extensive and intensive view of value. There isn't much room for dispute over whether an event or action is spiritual or material in nature. Or in my first semester course I have my students examine Hamlet for what insights it affords concerning integrity and hypocrisy. Claudius gives them a wonderful opportunity to explore the meaning of hypocrisy.

Let's look more closely at this matter of truth, and its absoluteness. I remember the day I asked a colleague, a social scientist and a man I personally admire and respect, to read a syllabus I had just written in which I suggested to my students, very hesitantly and apologetically, that we were going to search for truth in a hypothesis the syllabus advanced.

As I suspected he would, my colleague, a stereotypical liberal, blanched when he saw the word truth, even with a small "t". I was myself scared when I decided to include the word. We may not be able to state it in propositional terms. We may not be able to prove beyond all shadow of doubt which epistomological system or synthesis of systems is truly correct, but we do know with certainty that human worth and dignity is absolute; it is self-evident. And we know that ample verification of this exists powerfully in great literature. This conviction may even be a fantasy, but there would be no human reality without such fantasy. Yet we must remember that we have only a version of absolute truth. We must not intimidate or indoctrinate. That is why we are professional people. But we must hold high the assurance that there is a truth and that it is of absolute importance. For too long we have winced at this notion. We have allowed the cynicism of the relativist to seep into our bones.

Maintaining objectivity in evaluating student essays is also not difficult. Objectivity must be required of the student. He must not be allowed to drift into stories about his own personal experience or opinion. He must stick to his thesis. He must not speculate on the probability of events outside the story, although the teacher may do this for purposes of clarification and emphasis. However, every time the teacher does, he must inform his students his own approach is a teaching device and remind them that they must not do this. The student must ground all his conclusions in what actually

happens in the story, and I require my students to back up their assertions with quotes. This keeps them from making prejudicial or impressionistic interpretations, or at least I know where they got their erroneous idea from, and I can deal with it from there. Student interpretations must be sensitive and penetrating, and they must account for all the details. A student who does this clearly must receive an "A" whether he agrees with his teacher or not. Understood as just explained, objectivity in meaning and evaluation is not difficult to achieve.

A composition course using works of literature has certain ancillary benefits, which would be considered primary benefits were it a literature course and not a composition course. We may in this way be able to rebuild the wall. We may be able to restore literature, and indeed all the arts, to their proper and salutary place in culture. We may once again throw engaging light on the darkness in the human heart. The study of literature, however indirect, is, I believe, a powerful stimulus to encourage the development of identity and integrity in our students. I believe engagement in the arts is the chief civilizing and humanizing force available to man. I believe they offer the most efficacious way to experience wholeness and to engage the whole person. I believe our students must come to understand that most TV offers literature of escape, and they must come to revere what happens within them when they are absorbed in literature of engagement.

Two questions remain: (1) Can the enjoyment of literature be taught to semi-literate students? and (2) If so, how? When I first hit upon the idea of using an anthology of literature instead of essays, I did so with great trepidation. I used the apparatus my textbooks offered to help me. But I soon learned how to do it without such help. I read to them very carefully and thoroughly with exhaustive explication. I seek to immerse them in the experience of literature as totally as I can. I work intensely both on the cognitive and on the affective level. I summarize before they read the selection. I read and explain with extra care all the passages relevant to their writing assignment. I give them two weeks to write the assignment after discussion is completed. They make bring up any problem that arises, or bring in anything they have written for me to discuss in front of the class during those two weeks. I return their papers the class period after I receive them. Anyone not satisfied with his grade may rewrite his paper and

turn it in the following class. The grade I utilize in determining final course grade is the better of the two grades received. I am a firm believer in time and revision. I also have duplicated the two best papers received on each assignment. I read them to the class and discuss their merits and deficiencies in detail. Students who do not understand the assignment may use the handouts as concrete guides in rewriting their papers. As you can see, such a course is very tight and intense, but it gets amazing results.

The arts are the well spring of the life force in mankind. Literature is a major current of that life force. We must no longer blush or hold back to affirm and promote that certainty. For too long we have winced before the smugness of positivism. Let us not forget that fascination with positivism led to naturalism in literature. Some of our own heralds, creative artists themselves, sold out to the positivist allure in the naturalist movement. Fortunately that movement has gone the way of all flesh. It has been the task of the Twentieth Century to pick up the pieces and try to put them back together again. Faulkner was right in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech. The wall is still there, mystically. It cannot disappear as long as mankind exists. But if literature is not revitalized, and the wall is not rebuilt, can mankind prevail? Let us not forget "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Great Books or Textual Studies?: Polar Agendas for the Eighties

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Summary

Educators pondering the future of literature in community colleges ought to examine the flaws and merits of two curricular models recently proposed by leading figures in the humanities and in literary study. On the one hand, the recent National Endowment for the Humanities report To Reclaim a Legacy, written by William Bennett and reflecting the views of people like E.D. Hirsch and Diane Ravitch, calls for what is essentially a revival of the Great Books tradition in humanities education. On the other hand, theorists like Terry Eagleton (in his controversial book Literary Theory: An Introduction) and Robert Scholes (in his new book Textual Power) have proposed that English curricula be widened to include textual studies in general--in other words, studies of all kinds of texts and even materials from a range of media. Clearly, adoption of either agenda would have profound implications for English departments, and clearly these two curricular visions represent polar convictions about what is important for students to know. Although this consequentiality and this polarity should engender sustained reflection and debate within community colleges as they contemplate the future of literature in their curricula, ultimately the textual studies model promises to be of more use in the coming years, even though it might have its own imperfections.

The persistence of the Great Books model suggests that educators have long found it of value, and certainly many teachers of literature experience despair when their students express unfamiliarity with authors and texts that they consider basic. All the same, restricting the humanities curriculum to the traditional canon unduly slights the justifiable claims of feminist theorists, popular culturists, semioticians, and others who have sought to expand the repertoire of works that literature classes examine. Whatever teachers' perceptions of the works' alleged "greatness,"

such perceptions are a function of values rooted in particular times and cultures, and the canon of the Great Books has largely been specifically a function of the values held by white Anglo-Saxon males. Moreover, the promotion of the canon has often been supported by an assumption that no longer proves tenable, if it ever did: namely, that many students will go on to graduate education and therefore need preliminary "coverage" of texts as undergraduates. By contrast, a textual studies approach lends itself to the empowerment of many kinds of students, especially those in community colleges, since it encourages them to analyze a range of discourses that otherwise might hold them in uncritical submission. While English teachers may fear that their educational mission risks collapse if the canon fails to hold sway in their classrooms, engaging in textual studies can actually provide them with a sounder, more substantial, more socially beneficial task.

Poems by Computer: Introducing Poetry in a High-Tech Society

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Computers will never replace poets; English teachers will not have to become computer experts in order to teach poetry. However, we live in a high-tech society where, generally speaking, computers are "in" and poetry is "out." We need to look at all the possibilities of using the computer, although some English teachers may still regard it as foe of thought and creativity. Here I shall recount some of my experiences with and thoughts about using this fascinating device.

I enjoy working with computers and think that they can eventually be useful to us and to our students, so I spent a sabbatical year learning to use the computers we have at Wright College and planning ways to use those machines in my classes. The 1985-86 school year is a year of experimentation for me; my main experiment is holding English 101 (first-semester college composition) classes in our Microcomputer Laboratory once or twice a week and having all the students write their essays on IBM Personal Computers, using the simple "Bank Street Writer" word processing program (Broderbund Software).

You may well wonder how poetry fits in (I'm not teaching either of our department's two remaining literature classes this semester). Well, I'd always introduced some poetry to my English 101 classes in order to emphasize such matters as figurative language, connotation and denotation, and the need for close attention to vocabulary. Most poems provoked only yawns, so I decided to see whether a combination of computer poetry and "real" poems would create interest. My English 101 students initially spent one fifty-minute class period on computer poetry (see Appendix 3). They tried "Poetrywriter" (Roberts) and copied down a stanza or two, and then went on to try "Compupoem" (Marcus), writing down or

printing one or two of what they considered to be their best efforts. This computer poetry day followed two class periods in which we discussed "real" poetry, including "We Real Cool" by Gwendolyn Brooks (a class favorite) and poems by Elizabeth Bishop, Karl Shapiro, and Emily Dickinson (not very popular). I invited my students to try "Poetrywriter" and "Compupoem" again on their own, and to write more poems inspired by computer poetry; I sponsored a "Crazy Compupoem Poetry Contest," open to all students, faculty, administrators, and staff at Wright College but entered mainly by my own students. I can't offer you a foolproof, tried-and-tested method for using computers to "sell" poetry to students, but I can tell you what I have tried and what possibilities I see in the future. My purpose here is to introduce possibilities, rather than conclusions from scholarly research. I will tell you what I have found out about computers and poetry; you may decide whether all this has any value, and, if so, how it can be integrated into composition, literature, and/or creative writing courses.

I shall begin with a brief look at Douglas Hofstadter's "Can Inspiration be Mechanized?"; go on to talk about four different ways computers can be used to teach or introduce or inspire students to write poetry, with emphasis on two programs I've actually used; and present both theoretical and practical looks into the future of computers and books and poetry.

In "Can Inspiration be Mechanized?", an article far too complex for me to attempt to explain here, Douglas Hofstadter of the University of Michigan imagines the English professor saying to the computer scientist, "You may mechanize your logic, but you'll never lay a finger on poetry." (18) Hofstadter believes that having creativity is an "automatic consequence of having the proper representation of concepts in a mind." A computer can store data (or concepts). What it lacks is a sensitivity to patterns, a kind of "loop detector" to get it out of the ruts of endless repetitions. (24) Only a theoretical self-watching computer could be creative; it would be able to filter out interesting changes in data structures and record them in another set of data structures.

According to Hofstadter, art has its own ruts or endless loops as each artist develops an individual style. ". . . Art progresses toward an ever wider vision of beauty. . .by. . .processes of

recognizing ruts and breaking out of ruts" (34), the ruts being artistic movements or schools or periods.

Computers and artists have much in common. "Hence one need not fear that the mechanization of creativity, if ever it comes about, will mark the end of art. Quite the contrary: it is a day to look forward to, because on that day our eyes will open (as will those of computers, to be sure) onto entire new worlds of beauty."

One way computers can be used in the study of poetry involves what may be called figure verse, pattern poetry, or concrete poetry (Beacham). This type of poetry, in which the form visually represents the theme, is a curiosity which has been around a long time. However, the computer screen provides a perfect place to try interesting visual effects.

Andrea Herrmann of Teachers College, Columbia University, conducted a year-long ethnographic study of a volunteer high school class of eight students using the "Bank Street Writer" word processing program on Apple computers. In December, she began to notice graphic displays like sleighs and elves and trees on the computer screens, so she thought of having her students try concrete or figure poetry.

Writing this kind of poetry with a word processor is challenging, but it helps teach students how to format their work, to make it print out as they want it. In writing a tree poem (Appendix 1), Heather, one of Herrmann's students, began with a long list of words related to trees at the top of her screen. Another student later adopted this technique to her regular writing. She decided to make a list of phrases to describe a person for a character sketch she was working on.

Writing figure verse or concrete poetry on a computer may be just fun and games, but it's something I hope to have my students try. "For a Thirtieth Birthday, with a Bottle of Burgundy" (Appendix 1) illustrates how form and theme can be integrated at a higher level. This poem could have been written on a computer, had one been available; I copied it on a computer.

Poetry-generating programs such as "Lifesongs" (Chatfield) and "Poetrywriter" (Roberts) generate poems randomly from entered data.

"Lifesongs" provides a demonstration of some of the more than 268 million possible variants of four sonnets composed so that each of their first through fourteenth lines are interchangeable. Here is an example:

> My vision wakened to a butterfly,
> halfway between the summer and the sea
> a force presided that appeared to be
> fixed in the system, yet just standing by,
> as if to leave sufficient chance to try
> our wit and wisdom, our joy and our esprit:
> flesh against stone, stone abutting sea;
> sea, seasons, clouds and sky.
>
> No one was watching when the summer came
> to take the ocean back. We would wait
> in silence, patient and alone:
> good company with neither pride nor shame,
> committed to dynamics inchoate
> in darkness, ineluctable as stone. (Chatfield 2)

The program of this type which I have tried is Don Roberts' "Poetrywriter." This program generates four-line stanzas continuously with a sort of "one from column a and one from column b" combination of transitions, adjectives, nouns, verbs, adverbs, and prepositional phrases (Appendix 2).

These stanzas are usually funny and often meaningless, but sometimes something interesting appears. I asked my students to try the program, and to stop it and copy down a stanza or two which they thought was good--or funny. One student, Joseph Rockaitis, chose this stanza:

> TIRED GREEN PRIESTS
>
> WEAR BLINDLY TOWARD OUR LIVES
>
> FROM HAIRY GLOWING BODIES
>
> FLY BLINDLY FOREVER.

Joseph, who plans to become a priest, was inspired to write a "Compupoem" poem about a priest (Appendix 5A). Perhaps a mere gimmick, a program which generates poetry randomly from data entered by a human being, can produce something for students to relate to.

I also believe that the program produces some interesting images occasionally, and that it may make students think about how poets put words together. I have yet to find out whether it will inspire creativity as students try to imitate the form of the stanzas, but as they laugh at some of the computer-generated poems, the students may be motivated to try reading and writing some real--and better--poems. At the very least, the program is fun to play with, for students and teachers alike.

CAI (computer-assisted instruction) programs are the kinds of programs some of us at the City Colleges of Chicago have written for or used on the PLATO system. I have seen a PLATO program (under development at the time) which presented a poem on the screen and asked questions about it; some of the questions involved interpretation, and I didn't agree with the answers presented as the correct ones. I don't think that poetry, which by its very nature invites individual interpretations, lends itself well to computer lessons of that type. However, two programs I've read about, but not seen, sound interesting.

The Reverend Donald Lynch of Fairfield University in Connecticut is developing "The Shakespeare Library." (Sillery) This is related more to drama than to poetry, but I think it's interesting enough to mention here. Lynch's purpose is to provide high-tech assistance in understanding Shakespeare's work. One major part of the program will present a color-coded on-screen chart of the interrelationships of characters in any one of the thirty-seven plays. Lynch believes that this will take the place of a lot of blackboard writing, and will help him chart out the complicated genealogies students need as background to the history plays. The obvious question is, "Can't this be done in a book?" Of course it can, but it may prove to be more fun on a computer screen. The program may include interactive tutorials and quizzes too.

"LITterms: A Tutorial for Enjoying Literature," by Richard D. Rust of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is a computer-assisted program to teach literary terms. According to the author, the program has these advantages:

1. The student can find a term in various ways. He may choose it from an aphabetical list, for example, or he may choose from an alphabetical list, for example, or he may choose from a more specialized list such as "Forms of Poetry," etc.

2. Colors and graphics make definitions as memorable and clear as possible. This is interactive showing as opposed to mere telling.

3. The learner controls the pace and extent of the material covered.

4. The student can learn terms by a system of reading a simple definition, then seeing the concept illustrated with examples, then being tested on his/her knowledge of how the term works.

5. There are options for seeing additional examples of applications of terms.

6. There is immediate feedback on wrong answers.

7. There are hints or helps to lead the student to the right answer.

Also, in learning terminology, the students will be exposed to examples from first-rate literature.

Part one of this program focuses on poetry, and includes poetry terms, developed as a logically structured tutorial on meter, sound, imagery, language, and forms. "LITterms, Part 1: a Tutorial for Enjoying Poetry" takes about forty-five to sixty minutes, but students can work at their own pace. This program was tested at the University of North Carolina and at a high school, with uniformly positive responses from students. Pretests and posttests in literature classes at North Carolina showed 69 per cent improvement

for those using "LITterms" vs. 27 per cent improvement for those using glossaries for the same length of time.

I have not seen this program, and I doubt that it is commercially available; the only point I wish to make about it is that it sounds promising. In my work with PLATO I have learned that students generally prefer lessons on a screen to lessons in a book, so perhaps the magic of CAI programs is simply their ability to motivate students.

Finally, there are the interactive poetry-writing programs. Hale Chatfield wrote, ". . . there are numerous ways in which 'interactive' computer programs can allow the computer and the computer-user to interact, work cooperatively, in the composition of a poem--which in effect makes collaborators of the poet using the computer and the poet who wrote or designed the program."(1) His program "Haikuku" provides an introduction to the Japanese poetry form known as the Haiku, and then lets the student experiment with the form by presenting one line and prompting the student to write the other two. The computer merely presents random lines to stimulate the student's creativity. Here is an example from "Haikuku":

Abandoned Gardens

My love and I one evening

visited this place.

Sitting in the sun.

Butterfly wings catch the breeze:

shadows fall to earth.

Sharp bristling weather:

My granddad brings the dogs in

where the fireplace sings. (2)

Chatfield also discusses what he calls "closed text" and "open text" poetry writing programs. In the "closed text" program, a short poem is shown the user in printed form, and then the collaborating poet writes a continuation of the poem by responding to prompts from the computer. The results will be close in theme and subject: theme and variations. "Open text" programs, about which Chatfield gives few details, should present more options in length, subject, and theme.

Michael Newman, medical researcher and poet, author of such poems as "Steroids: an ode to what just fixed my tendon," has created what he calls "the world's first poetry processor."(Nace) It is described in PC World magazine this way: "Using color and sound to indicate meter and rhyme schemes, Newman has transformed the PC into a loom for weaving verse into classical forms--sonnets and sestinas and villanelles--while enabling budding poets to keep track of a poem's myriad elements." The program also includes a data base of successful poems that "permits you to clone Shakespeare or Browning, borrowing a master's structure but substituting your own words."

Michael Newman's comments on poetry are worth quoting here: he says, ". . . fitting poetry to an interactive medium will breathe new life into hitherto dormant lyrical forms. . . . The musical intonation of speech--prosody--causes blood to flow to right-brain cell circuits, engendering images. It also sends reward chemicals to the brain. Poetry is as marketable as a drug but delivers the virtues of prayer."

Stephen Marcus' interactive poetry-writing program "Compupoem" is known to computer-buff English teachers everywhere. It was written for Apple computers, so as an IBM user virtually untrained in programming, I was able to use only the main part of "Compupoem" in a version for which I adapted an elementary program. The user is asked to choose a noun, two adjectives, a prepositional phrase, a verb, and two adverbs, and a poem is created, with the words in a slightly different order than the one in which they were written. You may see the way my version of the program works in Appendix 4.

In addition to a slightly different version of what you see there, Marcus' complete program includes "fourteen different kinds of advice on such topics as choosing adverbs, prepositional

phrases, nouns, etc., and on zen and the art of computer use. Students may also see their poems instantly re-written in different formats in order to examine the relationship between form and impact."("Compupoem: A Computer-Assisted Writing Activity" 29)

I first used my version of this program in three English 101 classes on October 11, 1985.(Appendix 3) The students first tried "Poetrywriter" and copied down an interesting stanza or two. For the rest of the fifty-minute period, they wrote poems with "Compupoem," and most handed in two or more of what they considered their best efforts. In Appendixes 5A and 5B you may see a cross section of the poems the students produced. I was amazed at the variety of ideas expressed in poems by good and poor students alike.

You will notice that some of the poems don't follow the "Compupoem" form exactly. In some cases this is because the students didn't know the parts of speech, but in others it's because I encouraged the students to be creative and change words around as they liked. Some students were interested in writing more original poems inspired by "Poetrywriter" and "Compupoem."

Now that we have looked at four ways to use computers in teaching poetry (figure verse, poetry-generating programs, computer-assisted instruction programs, and interactive poetry-writing programs), I will go on to both theoretical and practical looks into the future of computers and books and poetry.

What does the future hold for computers in the teaching of literature and writing? Will books and poetry continue to exist? I don't know. Since some people may see computers as the enemy, I'll mention one computer program, one book, and two technological marvels which seem to justify the worst fears any English teacher could possibly have.

"Racter" (Etter and Chamberlain) is a computer program which has "a 2,800 word vocabulary and a fine command of English grammar." It is a program which lets you have a conversation with your computer; he (or it) answers questions in complete, grammatically correct and fairly rational sentences. Racter has written the first book of computer-generated prose and poetry, The Policeman's Beard Is Half Constructed. According to a brief

reference in a recent issue of Computerpeople Monthly, this book "seems no worse than a lot of modern poetry written by humans." This negative comment about modern poetry may deserve our attention, but let's go on to the new technology.

Ron Jeffries' article "Goodbye, Gutenberg!" is an interview with Gary Kildall, designer of the CP/M computer operating system and founder of Digital Research, Inc. Kildall claims that printed books could be replaced by electronic systems within fifteen years. It already costs less to produce a compact read-only memory optical disk platter that holds the equivalent of about two hundred printed books than to print the same amount of information on paper.

The only other thing we will need is something like Alan Kay's Dynabook, a powerful, thin, lightweight notebook computer with a bright, readable 8 1/2 x 11-inch screen from which we can read the material on those compact disks. This product is not expected to be available for at least five years. Kildall admits that books won't disappear right away, but he believes that most changes in our society are based on economics, and when these technological wonders come to pass, putting information on paper won't make sense.

Well, there's the enemy, if you care to consider it as such: poetry written by Racter and read from a compact disk in a book-size computer. Will all of this come to pass? Who knows? Unlike many other English teachers, I find computers interesting and promising, but I believe in the future of poetry, and I am not ready to give up books.

My more practical if less scientific view of the future involves the proliferation of computers in offices, schools, and homes, not as trendy consumer items for hobbyists but as practical tools. Our students will be familiar with computers and will expect to use them in most of their classes. Approximately sixty-five percent of my English 101 students entered my classes in fall, 1985, having used computers at least occasionally. My experience has shown that most students like computers for writing, learn from well-written CAI lessons, and can be inspired by programs such as "Poetrywriter" and "Compupoem" to think about poetry and to try to write it. I look forward to trying some of the other programs and ideas I've mentioned here.

Electrical engineer Banu Onaral of Drexel University, Philadelphia, a school where each student is required to buy a Macintosh computer, said, ". . .In the hands of a professor who really believes, it seems the computer can do miracles."(Elmer-Dewitt) Both the believers and the skeptics among us should consider whether or not the computer has value for introducing poetry in a high-tech society.

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Appendix 1

For a Thirtieth
Birthday, with a
Bottle of Burgundy
by John Hollander
(Beacham, 208)

Drop by
Drop it
Empties
Now not
Even as
Our own
Tearful
Vintage
Gathering
Itself with
Such slowness
Gradually might
Widen at the bottom
Of some oblate vessel
But as when the pouring
Bottle now nearly half of
Its old wine spent delivers
The rest up in sobs rapidly
Tears years and wine expire
As tosspot Time sends after
His cellarer once more alas
Then let the darkling drops
Wept in a decent year along
The golden slopes elude for
A moment or so his horribly
Steady pouring hand and run
Into sparkling glasses still
Unshattered yes and undimmed.

A Tree, by Heather
(Hermann, 164)

ax
limb
branch
kindling
log timber
campfire ash
bark twig wood
green chlorophyl
leaf wind rustling
needles pinecone sap
autumn red orange fall
spring sun blossom fruit
winter bare Christmas ball
ornaments tinsel star lights
nest bird stump hollow decayed
forest thicket enchanted density
jungle grove shelter rain brownish
l'arbre feuillage foret l'oiseau Noel
trunk
trunk
trunk
trunk
r r
o o o
o o o
t t t
s s s

153

Appendix 2

```
RUN

POETRYWRITER, by Don Roberts

The computer will write poems forever.  Press CONTROL-NUM LOCK to
pause, any key to restart, CONTROL-BREAK (SCROLL LOCK) to end the
program.

HAIRY OLD BODIES
WEAR NOISILY BEYOND THE PALE,
FROM SPARKLING MEAN BODIES
FIGHT HAPPILY IN THE NIGHT.

FOLDED ROUND GIANTS
LAST BLINDLY BEYOND THE PALE,
WHILE NAKED DARK BODIES
FIGHT HAPPILY IN THE WIND.

BIG BALD MARBLES
FLASH HEARTILY IN THE GROUND,
AND JOLLY GREEN DOGS
FIGHT CONCRETELY TO THE DEATH.

ROUGH BLUE GIANTS
PLAY CONCRETELY IN THE WIND,
THE NAKED BALD DOGS
TURN RUGGEDLY FROM THE VALLEY.

TIRED RED FLOWERS
FIGHT SMOOTHLY IN THE WIND,
FOR FOLDED RED FARMERS
RUN BLINDLY FROM THE VALLEY.
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154

SPARKLING BLUE HENCHMEN
PLOW WHOLEHEARTEDLY ON THE HILL,
MEANWHILE TIGHT CARVED HENCHMEN
FIGHT SMOOTHLY FROM A MOUNTAIN.

LIVELY MEAN BOYS
TURN SMARTLY TO THE DEATH,
FOR JOLLY LOUD CATS
TALK CONCRETELY TO THE DEATH.

FOLDED BLUE WIVES
TRYST LOOSELY ON THE HILL,
OR HAIRY YOUNG LOVERS
TURN CONCRETELY ON THE HILL.

JOLLY YOUNG GIANTS
TRYST WETLY NEAR A TREE,
AND FOLDED YOUNG BAGS
GLOW NICELY DOWN THE TUBES.

Appendix 3

ENGLISH 101
Mrs. Styne

Fun with Computer Poetry

1. POETRYWRITER

At the A> prompt, type the following: basic poetry [then press ENTER]. The program will generate poems until you tell it to stop. To pause, press CTRL (on the left side of the keyboard) and NUM LOCK (at the upper right) at the upper right) at the same time, and then release both keys. To start the poems again, press any regular key or the spacebar.

Assignment: Find one or two four-line stanzas which you like, or which seem funny to you. Copy it (them) on a piece of paper. When you have finished this, stop the program by pressing CTRL and SCROLL LOCK (the key at the far upper right) at the same time, and then releasing both keys. You will see, among other things, the OK prompt of the Basic language. Type "system" (without quotation marks) and then press ENTER to return to the A> prompt.

11. COMPUPOEM

At the A> prompt, type the following: basic comppoem [then press ENTER]. Follow the instructions on the screen. You will be asked to think of a noun, two adjectives, a prepositional phrase, a verb, and two adverbs. These words will be put together to form a short poem. If you have trouble, ask for help.

Assignment: Write from two to four poems (you can keep trying by following the instructions on the screen). Be sure to write down each poem you may want to keep. Experiment by adding extra words if you wish.

To hand in: 1) the four-line stanza (s) you copied from the POETRYWRITER program. 2) at least two of the short poems you just created with Compupoem, handwritten or printed with SHIFT-PRTSC. Put your name on the paper(s).

Optional: Try to use your own words and imitate the form of the four-line POETRYWRITER verse, writing a poem of your own, or expand one of the COMPUPOEM poems into something longer and better, or write a poem of your own inspired by this class session. You may also copy some of the poems for further work at home, but please hand in at least 1) and 2) today. To work on original poetry on the computer, ask for Bank Street Writer (or WordStar) and your own data disk. Bring in any additional work next Wednesday, for possible extra credit (strictly optional).

Appendix 4

POEMS BY YOU AND THE IBM PC

This game may help you become a poet. It is based on a program called COMPUPOEM, which was written for Apple computers by Stephen Marcus of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Be sure that the CAPS LOCK is on. Use no punctuation marks. Press ENTER after each entry.

Please type your first name.
? MARLYS

Thank you, MARLYS. That sounds like a good name for a poet!

Think of a NOUN, and type it after the question mark. It may be preceded by A, An, or THE.

? THE NIGHT

Add an ADJECTIVE to describe your NOUN.

? DARK

Think of another ADJECTIVE.

? THREATENING

Write a PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE telling where or when something can happen to your NOUN.

? OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

Think of a VERB to go with your NOUN.

? HOVERS

Choose an ADVERB (probably ending in -LY) describing how your NOUN does it.

? MENACINGLY

Add another ADVERB.

? MYSTERIOUSLY

Here is your poem, MARYLS:

THE NIGHT
DARK, THREATENING
OUTSIDE THE WINDOW
MENACINGLY, MYSTERIOUSLY
HOVERS.

If you like this poem, copy it on paper or print it with SHIFT-PRTSC. Then you will be able to use your word processor or your pen to improve and/or expand it. If you do not copy or print your poem, it will disappear forever.

To try another poem, press F2 (function key 2, at the left side of your keyboard).

Appendix 5A

Poems from "Compupoem": English 101 A, E2, and G, October 11, 1985:

by Glen Lind:

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST
  TRANSPARENT, LIQUID
SHOPS AT JEWEL ON A SATURDAY NIGHT
  WISTFULLY, ACCORDINGLY
WEEPS.

by Bernard Brown:

GIRLS
  YOUNG, BRIGHT
IN THE PARK
  SHAPELY, BEAUTIFULLY
SLIM.

by Karl Tuntland:

MY SWEETHEART
  KIND, SENSITIVE
IN THE MOONLIGHT
  SEDUCTIVELY, PASSIONATELY
STARES.

by Martha Gonzalez:

THE OCEAN
  BLUE AND ROARING
AS IT CRASHES ON THE ROCKS
LOUDLY, NOISILY
SINGS.

by Hector Irula:

THE MOON
  ROUND AS A DISH, HUGE AS A BALLOON
ABOVE THE CITY
  BRIGHTLY, GRACEFULLY
SHINES.

by Debi Gajewski:

TEACHERS
  DEDICATED, CARING
IN THE CLASSROOM
  QUICKLY, UNKNOWINGLY
LEARN.

Appendix 58

by Michael Killingbeck:

THE CAT
  BLACK, WICKED
MIDNIGHT IN AN ALLEY
  POMPOUSLY, HEDONISTICALLY
WALKS.

by Jose Rivera:

CAR
  FAST, QUICK
ON THE STREETS
  QUICKLY, SMOOTHLY
MOVES.

by Cesar Pinto:

DINOSAUR
  BIG, DUMB
DURING THE ICE AGE
  BRAVELY, PEACEFULLY
DIES.

by Jeanine Jurasz:

THE LAKE
  GLASS-LIKE, CALM
IN THE EARLY MORNING
  BEAUTIFULLY, SOLEMNLY
SPARKLES.

by Vahe Mekhitarian:

BUSINESSMEN
  GREEDY, FAT
IN AN OFFICE
  MISERLY, CRIMINALLY
SITTING.

by David Macapagal:

NEGROES
 GENTLE, OPPRESSED
WITHOUT MARTIN'S WISDOM
 INNOCENTLY, FRUITLESSLY
HOPING.

by Joseph Rockaitis:

PRIEST
  DEDICATED, RESERVED
INSIDE THE CHURCH
  SINCERELY, DEVOUTLY
PRAYING.

by Stephano Kontos:

BONZO
 INTELLIGENT, SOPHISTICATED
NOMINATED FOR PRESIDENT
 MASTERFULLY, UNQUESTIONINGLY
REPUBLICAN.

by Michelle Hodal:

GANGSTER
  RUTHLESS, EVIL
AT THE SEEDY BAR
  CUNNINGLY, STUPIDLY
HIDING.

by Linda Schultz:

THE CAMPERS
  ROWDY, OBNOXIOUS
IN THE WOODS
  HAPPILY, HASTILY
HIKING.

by Rick Helberger:

A BOAT
  GREEN WITH ALGAE
AGAINST THE ROCKS
  RELENTLESSLY, COMPLETELY
WAS SMASHED.

by Anne Pfeffer:

THE HOLE
  BLACK, EMPTY
IN THE INFINITE SOLAR SYSTEM
  RUTHLESSLY, ULTIMATELY
ENVELOPS ALL MATTER.

Appendix 50

by Jesus Osegueda:

WE
  POOR, RICH
DURING OUR LIVES
  SADLY OR HAPPILY
AWAIT.

by Virginia Oliver:

JAMES
  BAD, UNHELPFUL SCHOOL
LONELY, UNHAPPY
WAS.

by Olga Salcedo:

A DOG
  PLAYFUL, CAREFREE
IN THE PARK
  VERY PROUDLY
PRANCING.

by Bob Bochowski:

THE LEAVES OF FALL
  COLORFUL IN BRIGHT ARRAY
DAZZLE MERRILY.

by Barbara Krzywda:

SNOW
  WHITE, COLD, AND SHINY
DURING THE WINTERTIME IN THE MOUNTAINS
  SLOWLY, SOFTLY
FALLS.

by Edwin Castro:

  GUITAR
    SHINY, RED
  ON A STAGE DRAWS ATTENTION
    BEAUTIFULLY, MUSICALLY
  PLAYS.

by Jody Switzer:

GIRLS
  YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL
IN THE CITY
  SEXILY, SULTRILY
MOVE.

by Andrew Lewandowski:

THE PANTHER
  MENACING, EVIL
PERCHED ATOP A BLUFF
  INTENSELY, DELIBERATELY
CONTEMPLATES.

by Alan Podgorny:

THE CAR
  BIG RED JUNK, RUSTING
IS PASSING ITS AGE
  BYE, BYE
IS SLOWLY DYING.

by Julie Magnus:

EYES
  BLUE, HYPNOTIZING
ON A COOL AUTUMN NIGHT
  LOVINGLY, EMBRACINGLY
LOOK AT ME.

by Isuf Perezic:

THE DEMON
  TERRIFYING, TEMPERED
ON A COLD, DARK NIGHT
  UNMERCIFULLY, UNREMORSEFULLY
SLAUGHTERED.

The Imagemaker In Matrixland or How To Establish a Literature Course In a Community College In Three Easy (?) Steps

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"Why do I have to take a literature course? I want to be an engineer not an English professor!"

"I have one word for this lit course and it's spelled D-U-L-L, with a capital 'D'!"

"Literature? I came to this place to get away from that stuff and now you're shoving it at me again!"

Sound familiar? Anyone who has ever taught a literature course to a class filled with practical-minded engineering students or goal-oriented business students has heard these comments and many more like them.

Many students come to community and technical colleges to escape what they call "irrelevant" courses in the humanities and the arts. Such students want a bare-bones curriculum they can finish in two years or less so that they can get out into the "real world," land a well-paying job and start the long climb up the corporate ladder.

Of course, students aren't the only ones who have this attitude. Administrators in community and technical colleges, hungry for students and, therefore, conscious of student desires, often shy away from any course in the curriculum that even hints at "irrelevancy." Moreover, these administrators are often very conscious of their distinct mission within the educational hierarchy. As a result, they frequently emphasize the differences rather than the similarities between two and four year colleges. Naturally, no one can fault them for this point of view. Their job is, after all, to attract and retain students and one way to do this is to emphasize the unique selling points of their institutions. Sometimes, however, this attitude can be detrimental,

especially when it results in a much too narrow definition of relevancy.

Such was the case at North Central in 1972. At that time the administration was proud to advertise the college as a "no frills" alternative to the local branch of Ohio State. Needless to say, this position created an almost impenetrable barrier to anyone who proposed the addition of any course in the humanities, let alone a specific course devoted primarily to literature. Much of the problem, of course, was due to the very nature of the programs offered at North Central. Constructing programs that would lead to a degree within a two-year span meant that the curriculum had to be very rigid. As a result, from a purely practical point of view, it was very difficult to fit any new course into the tightly-built schedules. This was especially true in 1972 when the institution was relatively young and both the administration and the faculty had very little experience with this new creature known as the two-year technical college.

Nevertheless, those of us in the English Department of North Central still dreamed of the day we could introduce some sort of literature course into the curriculum. Such dreams remained static, however, until we hit on a plan to ease a literature course into the curriculum. On one cold, wintry afternoon, at an especially dull departmental meeting, one of our members (modesty prevents me from mentioning who) suggested a method of introducing a literature course. Rather than leading a frontal assault, the plan was to initiate a flanking maneuver. Instead of introducing a brand new course, we would offer an alternative version of an existing upper division writing course, one which would still be called Advanced Communication, but which would include a literature component.

The solution was so simple we were embarrassed that no one had thought of it before. However, now that the proposal was on the table, we wasted no time lamenting lost opportunities. Instead, we jumped at the suggestion and thus was born the first literature course at North Central.

The course, which was first called Advanced Communication A (as opposed to Advanced Communication B), has since evolved into The Modern Age 107. The steps in the evolution of this course make for an interesting study in what can happen if you know how and when to

make a move from a rigidly organized, purely practical curriculum to one gently colored with a touch of literature.

The evolutionary steps in the development of The Modern Age are as follows:

1. We first worked a literature component into an existing course, offering this "experimental hybrid" as an alternative to the usual upper level course in advanced writing.

2. In the second stage, dubbed "The Chickering Connection," we justified the addition of the literature component in a way that satisfied not only the administration but, surprisingly enough, the students as well.

3. The third step involved developing course content and techniques that are attractive to practical-minded students. In our case such "packaging" meant the use of a unifying theme in the course, the inclusion of important background information in the introductory unit, the study of authors that help students identify with the literature they read, the addition of a variety of electronic media to supplement the written word and, finally, the introduction of computers into the course.

Let's look at these three steps one at a time. As noted above, our first step was to create an "experimental hybrid" course as an alternative to the usual upper division writing course. All students at North Central, regardless of discipline, must take three writing courses, a basic composition course, a specialized writing course in either business or technical writing and an upper level course, Advanced Communication, consisting primarily of research. It was this last course which supplied the source of our hybrid. Rather than introducing an entirely new course, we singled out two sections of Advanced Communication and labeled them Advanced Communication A. We retained the research component of the course, but reduced the requirements from two papers to one. This change freed some time ordinarily devoted to the second paper. We then proposed to fill this time with special readings in essays, stories and other genres. The course description read as follows:

Advanced Communication A - 3 credit hours. A study of the varied views of business, industry and institutions presented in well- known essays, stories and other writings. Special emphasis on technology, prosperity and morality. Course includes instruction in research techniques and a research project.

The purpose of the course was to introduce students to important issues and concerns generated by a technological society as seen through the eyes of contemporary authors and as supplemented by their own research into such issues and concerns. Of course, the students also continued to refine their writing skills because they were required to write progress reports and memos on their research projects and, of course, to produce a seven to ten page research paper on the subject of their choice.

The new experimental hybrid course, Advanced Communication A, was introduced as an experiment. We wanted to convince the administration not only that students would not lose any instruction in writing but that they would also improve their writing by exposure to a variety of different techniques represented by a variety of expert contemporary authors. I want to emphasize that we never abandoned the writing portion of the course. None of us ever intended this and it has not happened. In fact, if anything, students have become more enthusiastic about writing because they suddenly see that it has a purpose beyond filling up their schedules with extra work they do not like.

How we convinced the students of this fact, indeed how we also convinced not only the administration but also ourselves of this fact, involves a look at the second step in the evolution of The Modern Age. This step has been dubbed "The Chickering Connection." Arthur W. Chickering is the director of The Center for the Study of Higher Education at Memphis State University. He holds a Ph.D. in psychology, but, appropriately enough, he began his career with a B.A. in comparative literature from Wesleyan University and an M.A. in teaching English from The Graduate School of Education at Harvard University (Chickering I). In fact, it may have been this combination of degrees and expertise that led Dr. Chickering to his interest in the relationship between liberal and technical education. In 1981, Dr. Chickering wrote a paper for the Memphis State University Professional Development Program. The paper, entitled "The Modern College: Integrating Liberal Education, Work and Human

Development," was delivered at a symposium held at North Central in the autumn of 1982. Chickering's paper makes extensive use of research done by George Kiemp. In his study "Relating Work and Education," Kiemp examined a control group of successful people in an attempt to discover what characteristics help workers succeed on the job. Surprisingly, Kiemp's study revealed that success on the job is not directly related to the amount of knowledge one has about a particular field. Rather, success is linked directly to cognitive skills, such as conceptualizing and the ability to understand the many sides of controversial issues, and interpersonal skills, such as the ability to communicate and the ability to empathize accurately with others. (Chickering 7-9) Chickering uses Kiemp's data to support his belief that the humanities, which help develop these cognitive and interpersonal skills, cannot be artificially separated from course work designed specifically to add to a student's knowledge of his technical field. The two areas, defined by Chickering as liberal education and preparation for work, must remain integrated. (9-10)

Chickering's conclusions provided the English Department at North Central with a convincing argument for the experimental hybrid course, Advanced Communication A. The literature course would give students an opportunity to develop both their cognitive and their interpersonal skills. For example, students develop the cognitive skills of information processing and conceptualizing as they work on their research papers and as they analyze and interpret the various literary works they read and discuss in class. Moreover, as they read the poems, short stories, novels and plays assigned, they encounter controversial issues which often lead to lively classroom discussions on a variety of topics. These literary works and the resulting discussions also help them develop their ability to learn from others, as well as their interpersonal skills of communication and empathy. Using this approach, it was easy to convince the administration that a discussion on The Great Gatsby, for instance, would be of great benefit for students because it would help the cognitive and interpersonal skills so necessary to success on the job.

Chickering's thesis not only convinced the administration to allow the experimental hybrid into the curriculum, but also convinced students that the course was worth a second look. Since discovering Chickering's paper and Kiemp's research, I have used

both in my introductory lecture material. The results have been very gratifying. Once students become convinced that I'm not trying to pound irrelevant facts into their heads, they become more willing to listen to what I have to say about literature and, if not eager to read it themselves, at least a bit less hostile when faced with the task of doing so for class assignments. Exposed to "The Chickering Connection," they see the practical application of the work they're doing and thus take it much more seriously.

Of course, the effort to help students overcome their resistance to literature could not stop with the introductory lecture. Nor could the task rest solely on the persuasive power of "The Chickering Connection." On the contrary, once the students are "willing to listen," the course itself must deliver the results promised. This brings us to the third step in the process, that is, tailor making the course to fit the needs of practical minded business, engineering and health science students. The customizing process did not take place overnight. In fact, the changes took place in a gradual evolution over a number of years. Each time the course was taught, something new was added to make the material more palatable to the students to better accomplish the aims of the program, that is, to enhance their appreciation of literature while aiding their development as responsible, successful technicians. Thus far, these gradual alternatives, additions and modifications can be summarized as follows:

- At first the literary portion of the course was organized around genres. This technique did not work well, however, and was abandoned in favor of a thematic approach which proved to be much more satisfying to both the professor and the students.

- After several quarters, the introductory unit was reorganized adding background material which introduces the students to terms such as figurative language, subject matter, theme, style and so on. Moreover, guidelines were introduced instructing students in proper reading and evaluating techniques.

- The research topic list, which had been rather extensive, was narrowed and keyed into both the authors and the thematic content covered in the course.

- Various forms of electronic media were added to the course including the use of recordings of poetry readings and video tapes of movie versions of The Grapes of Wrath and The Great Gatsby, among others.

- Computerized library search techniques and word processing options are currently being added to the course in an effort to demonstrate to administrators and students alike that the literature course is as up to date technologically as most other courses in the college's widely diverse curriculum.

More detail on each of these steps is in order. The first unit in Advanced Communication, now called The Modern Age, involves a detailed look at research techniques. After this, however, the course moves on to more substantive areas, that is, the study of literature. Originally, the course was organized around genres. Depending on an individual instructor's discretion, poetry was usually first, followed by a unit on fiction, followed by either a novel or play. This technique proved unsatisfactory, however. Students, who were conditioned to reading books in electronics, accounting or biology frequently found it difficult to penetrate the figurative language of poetry and fiction. In addition, those students who did "pierce the veil" were often displeased by the irrelevant themes they found waiting as their reward.

Shifting to a thematic approach changed all this. With a set theme in front of them, students had a better chance of deciphering a given poem. The thematic units gave them a frame of reference lacking in the genre approach. Of course, choosing an appropriate thematically organized textbook also proved difficult. We had to find a text that covered themes that our students could easily identify with. As luck would have it, we stumbled on the perfect text when we found Business in Literature edited by Charles Burden. The text was designed around an examination of organizations as they affect the lives of people who live in a modern technological state. The first unit of Business in Literature focuses on life styles, the second on morals, the third on ethics, the fourth on fulfillment and the fifth on religion. When introduced to the new approach, students responded immediately. They now had a focus and direction lacking in the genre approach. It thus became easier for

them to analyze the literary works assigned to them. Moreover, they also found they could readily identify with the themes present in those works. Business in Literature also had the additional blessing of including at least one rock song, one Biblical parable and several works by popular writers such as Rod McKuen, E.B. White, Ogden Nash and Antoine de Saint-Exupery. Many students, therefore, encountered familiar material and thus became more relaxed with both the book and the course.

Unfortunately, Business in Literature went out of print in 1984, forcing us to search for another text. After exploring the market, we settled on The Modern Age, edited by Leonard Lief and and James F. Light. The Modern Age (which is also now the name of the course) takes a different thematic approach, organizing its literary works chronologically. The first unit, entitled "Influential Voices," covers the years 1848 to 1917; the second, entitled "The" The Long Armistice," covers the Roaring Twenties and The Great Depression of the 1930s; the final unit, dubbed "Under the Volcano," moves from 1939 to the present. Surprisingly, the change in texts has proven to be a blessing in disguise. While maintaining a thematic approach, it also creates more flexibility, allowing instructors to focus on a number of different themes in each time period. Thus, in the last unit one instructor might decide to focus on the problem of crime, while others may choose to spotlight war, environmental problems, pollution, and so on.

Of course, convincing students of the relevancy of the material and then supplying them with a thematic backdrop would do little good if they did not have the tools needed to properly analyze and interpret the various literary works they were required to read. While this may seem obvious now, it did not occur to us until after the course had been taught for several quarters. The course now includes an orientation unit that thoroughly examines various literary devices, definitions and techniques all designed to make the students' experience with literature more productive and thus more valuable. For instance, the orientation unit now includes a definition of literature which helps the students see the differences between what they're reading in other courses and what they will encounter in the literature course. In addition, the students are also introduced to the concept of figurative language and certain figurative language devices. This step is very important for students who deal primarily on a literal level most of the

time. A student who has no notion of hyperbole, for instance, may have difficulty with the first lines of "Secretary," by Ted Hughes:

> If I should touch her she would shriek and weeping
> Crawl off to nurse the terrible wound. (lines 1-2)

A student not versed in figurative language might be justifiably bewildered by the strange image of a screaming secretary who falls on the floor and crawls away leaving a bloody trail behind, simply because someone has touched her. Similarly, a student unschooled in allusion would have trouble understanding the first stanza of "Freshmen" by Barry Spacks:

> My freshmen
> settle in. Achilles
> sulks; Pascal consults
> his watch, and true
> Cordelia - with her just-washed hair,
> stern-hearted princess, ready to defend
> the meticulous garden of truths in her
> high school notebook -
> uncaps her ballpoint pen. (lines 1-9)

Without an appreciation of allusion such a student might wonder not only who Achilles, Pascal and Cordelia are, but also how such strange people managed to invade the classroom in the first place.

One of the most helpful hints that can be included in the orientation unit is an explanation of how to read poetry. Most students have no idea how to obtain the greatest benefit from their reading. They read poetry, either like a biology text or like a nursery rhyme and, thus, miss the mark when it comes to interpreting the poem. While most of these hints may seem like common sense, students tend to overlook them if left to their own devices simply because they are in an alien environment which makes them more than just a little uncomfortable. Thus, they tend to read poetry line by line in a sing-song manner that reduces most every poem to a pitiful parody of its pure self. A simple reminder that most poems have punctuation and sentence structure is surprisingly helpful in this regard. After being reminded of this, many students react as if they've suddenly been let in on a deep, dark

secret that will supply them with the key for decoding this "stuff" that has so long been a mystery to them. Even the most reluctant student can see the absurdity of trying to read a piece of prose line by line with no regard to punctuation and sentence structure. Thus, reading the first two stanzas of "My Papa's Waltz," by Theodore Roethke becomes more productive if the student follows the punctuation and sentence structure rather than simply reading it line by line thereby reducing the poem to the sing-song cadence of a nursery rhyme.

> The whiskey on your breath
> Could make a small boy dizzy;
> But I hung on like death.
> Such waltzing was not easy.
>
> We romped until the pans
> slid from the kitchen shelf;
> My mother's countenance
> Could not unfrown itself.
>
> (lines 1-8)

Of course, proper reading techniques, and an understanding of various terms, while helpful, cannot do the job of making literature more relevant all by themselves. Another stumbling block which bothered the practical minds of our business, engineering and health students was that the research and literature portions of the course were not properly integrated. In other words, the research unit of the course appeared to be simply "tacked on" as an after thought, rather than integrated into the course content. This unfortunate situation created in students and teacher alike a unique brand of pseudo-schizophrenia. The students seemed to be taking two different courses, one in research and one in literature, both crammed together in one not too well organized package. To combat this pseudo-schizophrenia, several instructors now incorporate research topics into the substantive literary portion of the course. For example, on the first day of the quarter, I pass out a topic sheet which lists, by author, the works we will read that quarter. Students then choose an author from the list on a first-come, first-served basis. When we are about to read that author's work in class, the student is required to give an oral presentation on that writer's life and themes. This technique accomplishes several objectives:

1. It forces students to begin their research early. While their paper is not due until the last week of the quarter, their oral presentation may begin as early as the third week.

2. It helps students see poets, novelists and dramatists as people rather than just names tagged on reading assignments. In turn, this new insight helps them interpret the themes of various works and adds to their appreciation of style and technique.

3. It integrates the two previously diverse sections of the course into a unified whole and thus cures that strange brand of pseudo-schizophrenia.

Many of the techniques outlined above will be less effective, however, if the material is not presented to students in an interesting, stimulating manner. For instance, I have found that my students react more favorably to poems after I've read them aloud in class. Dramatic readings give "life" to poems that seem otherwise dull and dreary to uninitiated students. Having discovered the effectiveness of this method, I began to search for other techniques that would take advantage of a multi-sensory approach. For example, in addition to my own readings, I also called upon the library's collection of recorded poetry readings and, at times, used them in lieu of my own reading. Such a technique is especially helpful in exploring the works of popular poets such as Carl Sandburg. The use of record albums and cassette tapes set a precedent that quickly opened the door for the use of video taped presentations.

Fortunately, at North Central, the English Department doubles as the Speech Department. This dual role means we have several VCR's at our disposal. While the primary function of the VCR's is to record student speeches, their use as a vehicle for the literature course soon became obvious. Ironically, the first video tape used in the class was a decidedly non literary offering, that is, the movie version of Jesus Christ Superstar. The taped movie had the advantages of being available and of breaking down student resistance to literature. Pointing out the use of plot, character

and setting in a popular rock opera made it easier to explain such concepts to the T.V. generation and thus helped students appreciate the same ideas when examining other works. We soon discovered that a number of literary works were available on video tape, including such masterpieces as The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck and The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald. This discovery made the use of the VCR even more popular.

Certainly the VCR will never replace reading, but it can be used to augment the reading of literature and thus help a visually conditioned generation appreciate the value of the written word. Of course, there is the danger that some students may view reading to be unnecessary if the tapes are available for general consumption. However, such an argument would exist whether the instructor used the VCR or chose to ignore it. Moreover, it can also be argued that it's better for the student to encounter literature on his own terms rather than not at all. Surprisingly, some students appreciate the written word even more after viewing a video taped counterpart of some work they've already read. For instance, the movie version of The Great Gatsby succeeds in capturing the gaudiness of Gatsby's garden parties but fails to convey their disturbing emptiness. That hollowness can only be transmitted by Fitzgerald's own words:

> There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft, or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. On week-ends his Rolls Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. And on Mondays eight servants, including an extra gardner, toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.(39)

Most students can detect the difference between the movie and the novel and can thus appreciate the power of the written word. They can see that it takes more talent and finesse to create an emotional response with words alone rather than with a huge cast of

extras and vast array of special effects. This is not to say that most do not still prefer the extras and the special effects. Nevertheless, they all come away from the experience with new-found respect for the written word.

Of course, once VCR's were introduced into the course it was virtually inevitable that personal computers would follow. The impetus for the inclusion of computerized instruction came after the use of computers was introduced into the other advanced writing course at North Central, Advanced Communication 109. We have incorporated two such units into the structure of 109: one unit involves familiarization with computerized library search techniques; the other involves the use of word processing in the writing project itself.

The introduction of computers to the literature course will be, by necessity, more gradual. The first step, which was instituted in the Spring of 1985, involves the use of the computerized search techniques in the research portion of the course. A typical description of an introductory unit involving both research in general and computerized search techniques in particular would read:

> Unit 1: At the end of this unit the students should understand in a general way what research is. They should also have reviewed how the campus library is arranged and how to find material there. They should understand computer searches for material and have conducted such a search. They should understand what a data base is and the function of a data researcher. They should be able to successfully complete exercises designed to test their knowledge of these subjects.

Just how far the use of computerized search techniques will take us is yet to be seen. However, already certain advantages are evident. For example, students in 107 now have more direct access to the resources of several additional library collections. This innovation allows the instructor to add some highly contemporary authors to the reading and research list. Previously, poets such as Nikki Giovanni, Dave Smith, Clarence Major, Dick Allen and James Magner could not be included as subjects of research because the campus library had virtually no material on them. Now they can be

added to the research topic list because the students have direct access to a more extensive collection of literary criticism. This is a significant change because it is often these poets with whom the younger students identify most easily. Other ramifications of computerized search techniques have yet to reveal themselves but certainly time will allow us to explore them all.

Thus, we have seen how a literature course can be introduced into a tightly structured curriculum which usually admits little or no change. Moreover, we have seen how to convince administrators and students alike of the relevance of such a course. Finally, we have seen how the course can evolve to better meet the needs of students while accomplishing the objectives of the instructor.

North Central's literature course will, no doubt, continue to evolve. We must adjust to meet the newly emerging technological environment that surrounds us so that we can offer students a vibrant, living experience with literature.

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182

Teaching Literature Through Television and Radio In Chicago, 1975-1985

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Summary

The City Colleges of Chicago have had the longest continuous experience in the use of television as an instructional medium of any educational institution in America. Since its inception in 1956, Chicago's TV College has, in one form or other, served hundreds of thousands of enrolled students, as well as countless others who watched its broadcasts for enrichment. In addition, other media have been employed as vehicles for course delivery, namely, radio, newspaper, and audio/videocassettes with varying degrees of success during those three decades.

This study examines the City Colleges of Chicago's efforts in media-based instruction during the past ten years with special attention to its use in literary instruction. As has been the case throughout the nation, this was a period of significant change in the methodology and philosophical approach to this form of instruction. Changes in the viewing habits of potential students as well as their increased expectations from the media have brought about major changes in the ways that educators present their material. Generations which have grown from "Sesame Street" through "NOVA" and "Masterpiece Theatre" are not easily drawn to a simple "talking head" presentation unless the head belongs to an unusually compelling person. Response to this increased visual literacy by media-based educators has taken several forms, and Chicago has been involved in these varied experiments as producer and--more importantly--as co-producer with other major institutions and consortia.

In describing the work done in Chicago during this period of change, special emphasis is given to the pedagogical underpinnings of a telecourse, namely study guides and ancillary print materials, textbooks, examinations, and faculty conferences. Media "produc-

tion values" are admittedly important, but no amount of video glitz can compensate for the absence of faculty input or solid curriculum planning.

Specific examples drawn from this period, especially in the teaching of literature, illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of media-based instruction and prompt some predictions about its future.

The American Short Story and the Research Course

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As it has often fallen my lot--both because I want to and because others don't--to teach English 102 (the research paper course) I have tried various approaches to teaching research. My greatest success has come while using literature as a research subject in that central course in the English curriculum. As teachers search for subjects that will "work" I would like to suggest that with a research paper based on literature--especially the American short story--we have an excellent chance to get our students to read, study, and even enjoy good literature while learning the rudiments of research.

Parenthetically, there is a self-selection process that often takes place before students enroll in the research paper course. If they are not transferring to a four-year institution, many colleges do not require the course, and if the course is not required, many students do not take it, especially if they fear research or the English Department in general.

The American short story has many advantages. First, the selections are short stories after all, so rarely will a reading assignment have to be over 50 pages, and even then can be divided into several assignments if the vocabulary or concepts are difficult. Second, as would be true of any body of literature that reflects a national character, American literature expresses ideas that are particularly American and thus accessible to our American students. Obviously, stories chosen must be suitable in content, complexity, and vocabulary for our own students, and a wide range of choices exist. Even stories by writers of 150 years ago like Edgar Allen Poe tell of characters and problems that strike a familiar chord. With Poe students often recognize neurotic terror, which they can identify with, at least through having seen it in the movies. If we as teachers know exactly what we want to do with a story and work to prepare our students, we will often find them

reading additional stories that aren't even assigned. Speaking of what might be done with a Poe story--I often use "The Masque of the Red Death" to help students see how setting creates the atmosphere and ultimately the meaning in this story. "The Fall of the House of Usher" also works well for showing how setting and character may be parallel in a story and give each other meaning. Other stories like Ambrose Bierce's "The Boarded Window" and such modern master stories as "A Rose for Emily" follow naturally from Poe.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, a vastly different kind of writer, of course, not only in subject but also in style, is equally successful with students if the stories are carefully worked on so that the world of the Puritans, which is of course unknown to them, comes alive. The students find that Hawthorne tells them what he "means" by his story. In "The Birthmark" he tells them after the alchemist Aylmer has removed the tiny "fairy-like" hand from the face of his beautiful wife Georgiana that "the fatal hand had grappled with the mystery of life, and was the bond by which an angelic spirit kept itself in union with a mortal frame." When this mark of imperfection is removed from her by her arrogant, scientific husband, Hawthorne says, she can no longer exist on this imperfect earth.

Students also react positively to stories like Mark Twain's "The Man Who Corrupted Hadleysburg," Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" and Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," each exposing the moral weakness of a community in a particularly American world. Numerous stories have a similar theme.

Students react strongly also to stories like Willa Cather's "Paul's Case" in which a boy of style and flair is caught between a world of red carnations and a world of poverty and squalor. Students do not and perhaps cannot accept that there is no way out of Paul's world for him. This story, as do many other stories of initiation, provokes heated discussion, both from young and older students who often weigh in from vastly different points of view. Other stories also work well for this initiation theme: "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" by F. Scott Fitzgerald; "The Killers" by Ernest Hemingway; "I Want to Know Why" by Sherwood Anderson", "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" by Richard Wright and "The Sky is Gray" by Ernest Gaines. These last stories appeal especially to Black students.

Some other themes that appeal to students include: the interrelation of youth and age as in Eudora Welty's "The Worn Path" and many Flannery O'Connor stories; and the effects of war on the returning veteran as in Hemingway's "Soldier's Home" and "Big Two-Hearted River."

Another theme in many stories that students recognize from their own experience is that of the "Wild Card" or the place of chance in life as developed in Ambrose Bierce's "Parker Adderson, Philosopher," (the story of a Union spy who is reconciled to being hanged in the morning but who goes crazy when he finds that he is to be executed immediately in a way not fitting a spy.

What specifically can a teacher do with all these stories, characters, themes, and settings? I hope to make suggestions toward a research project that teachers may find useful and adaptable to their tastes and needs and resources.

I use the text The American Short Story, Volumes I and II, and the films that go with the series. During the first half of the semester, the specific aim of the course is to help students read and write critically about one short story at a time. I assign the stories, and after the initial reading assignment, I test students with a fifteen-item quiz to make sure that they have sufficiently understood the details of the story. This is followed by a careful discussion of each story slanted toward the kind of analysis that they will be required to do in their writing. First, each semester, I assign a character analysis.

In order for students to understand what is expected of them I explain and give out several samples which demonstrate concretely what a character analysis is--both for a "static" or unchanging character and for a "dynamic" or changing character. In the process of this preparation for writing, I also show them the film of the story and we discuss the character as revealed through both short story and film. Using three stories especially suited for character analysis, students select the story they feel is appropriate for them to write about. The first story--let us use "Parker Adderson, Philosopher" by Ambrose Bierce, which has a dynamic main character as our example--is discussed fully and a sample thesis and topic sentences for a paper are worked out by the class as a whole and duplicated. The second story--let us use

Richard Wright's dynamic character of Dave Glover in "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" as an example--is fully discussed but no sample structure is developed. The third story--here "Soldier's Home" by Hemingway--is only briefly discussed. Students are then allowed to write on the story they choose, and their self-evaluation capability is impressive. The weakest students almost always write on story one, those with more knowledge or self-confidence write on story two, and the superior students with strong confidence in their ability or with more experience in interpreting literature, take story three. Not surprisingly many Black students choose Wright's story and a significant number of people with war-related experience take "Soldier's Home."

The process is repeated while students are instructed in how to do a thematic analysis and finally a setting analysis. I use the terminology of Brooks and Warren, Understanding Fiction, and there are a number of good textbooks on writing about literature that are helpful in instructing students in this kind of analysis should a teacher choose to use one. The skills that are being taught in the short papers are the ones students will apply to a group of related short stories, either by the same author or different authors, in the research paper.

During the short-paper-writing phase of the course, students also work on paraphrasing and summarizing techniques and use basic reference works, especially those aimed at the short story. Students are urged early to pick the author or stories they feel has the most to say to them. I then urge them to read further in the author's work and in the basic criticism to see what is available. We spend several classes in the library making sure each student knows how to use reference works, the card catalog, basic indexes and the reserve section.

The librarians at our college comment on how motivated my students seem and how excited they are about research. This is commented on significantly more than in the days when I had students writing on a variety of general subjects. Also, we have been able to build up the resources needed to support the research on the authors represented in the American Short Story series. We still have a way to go in that area, but we are making progress.

Best of all, I bring a new fire and enthusiasm--and patience--to teaching the research paper. I myself have to read and learn every semester because my students are always coming up with the unexpected. I couldn't be more pleased to have to work so hard.

Classic Poems, Some Vintage Literary Guidance, and the Contemporary Composition Student

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"Expository writing" was a label that reverberated with burdensome, restrictive responsibility for me when I was first hired to teach in a two-year college. When I encountered it in handbooks and readers, and especially when some of my colleagues advanced ideas about "expository writing," I had feelings akin to those I'd experienced in a darkened public grammar school room when a long word appeared on a rumpled screen and a voice rose over the grinding Bell and Howell projector, like an Old-Testament prophet out of the whirlwind, and pronounced: PHOTOSYNTHESIS. Was this sex? The A-bomb? ERPI--"Erpi"--Classroom Films was going to hit me with another damned mystery of life, and I was scared.

In my teaching it wasn't long before I began to reflect that I had been writing essays successfully for years in undergraduate and graduate school as an English major. Mercifully, no one had called the papers I wrote "expository"--or persuasive, or argumentative, or even critical. They were simply called "papers" (and "A" papers at that), and I had written them out of a love for the fiction or poetry I had been dealing with--which love was more often than not enlarged by a scholar who knew more than I and served as a catalyst. In time to save myself from a career of masquerading and my students from stupefying "Erpi" Classroom pronouncements, I reasoned that if I were to bring literature, with which I was uniquely educated to deal, to the writing class and cast upon it as friendly and authoritative a light as I was capable of giving off, making necessary adjustments to the abilities and general needs of the students, and emphasizing the experience of literature and the understanding of its craft, I should be able to cause a kind of literary photosynthesis. And I did.

Recognizing that what is best for me is not necessarily what works for someone else whose orientation is different, I'd like to share with you an instance of how I might use three classic poems

for the contemporary composition student. The poems are Shakespeare's Sonnet 29 ("When In Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes"), Keats's sonnet "When I Have Fears that I May Cease To Be," and Wallace Stevens' lyric "Domination of Black."

All three poems have the same point of view; the first-person speaker, in solitude, articulating despair. In all three the speaker withdraws into himself in what the nineteenth century calls melancholy, and the twentieth, depression. Shakespeare's narrator experiences an almost incredible mood swing, well before the poem is over. Though he reaches such depths of emotion that he feels "In disgrace with fortune and men's eyes," weeps over the sense that he is outcast, concludes that heaven rejects him, curses himself and envies friends, dislikes his own appearance, almost despises himself, and is contented least with what he most enjoys, his spirits suddenly soar to incomparable heights because he chances to remember someone he loves.

Our speaker in the Keats sonnet runs a psychological course that is less extreme and that makes the reverse progression, moving from images of joy and grandiosity to images of thoughtful deflation. His "teeming brain," the "high-piled books" he would write, the "Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance" that he would like to write, and the "fair creature of an hour" that he may not see again all give way to the sober lines:". . . --then on the shore / Of the wide world I stand alone, and think / Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink." It is of course significant that the last word in the poem is "sink."

While Shakespeare's sonnet may be said to move from low spirits to high, and Keats's from high to low, Stevens' lyric defines an internal environment in which the spirits start low and never shift, except to become more intense. The speaker surrenders to the domination of black. He is consumed by black, first in the room where he sits "At night by the fire"; then in the world outside, in which the peacocks and hemlocks figure, by impinging on his consciousness; and finally, by the planets themselves, which confirm a universal conspiracy to overcome him. As with both Keats and Shakespeare, Stevens offers levels of experience from earth to heaven, but the levels reinforce and enlarge a single mood. The problem of the speaker does not enjoy a resolution. Rather the

romantic image of the solitary figure in gloom takes on the modern existential condition of entrapment.

Each of these poems yields a thesis statement that has its integrity in terms of the particular poem. In Shakespeare's Sonnet 29 the symptoms of despair have been heaped one upon the other in the octave, spilling over into line 9, "Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising." The remedy appears "haply" in the tenth line. By the time we arrive at the couplet, the speaker is ready for his summing up, in two sharp, memorable lines. He has saved his thesis for last because his redemption came against such odds. It would not have seemed credible or been taken seriously if announced at the outset.

Keats's sonnet "When I Have Fears" also reserves for last the crystalized idea of the speaker's problem, but for different reasons. Like Shakespeare's poem, Keats's trades on a when-then relationship. However, there are three "when" clauses in Keats's sonnet, as distinguished from one in Shakespeare's, and each expands the threat of personal and professional unfulfillment for the speaker. There is no redemption for these threats, and in fact, no ostensible relief from the fear that death may come before the speaker has become the writer and lover he aims to be. His resolution is to confront the fear, by thinking, until the ideals disappear and he is left with the reality--which is that death may indeed deprive the ambitious artist of what he most desires. Paradoxically, there is an implied argument for living here; work now; love soon; experience life intensely.

Wallace Stevens' "Domination of Black" delivers its thesis more obliquely. The poem moves through repeated evocative images to an admission, at the end, of fear: "I felt afraid. / And I remembered the cry of the peacocks." Rendered into prose the thesis might be stated this way: Because the interior, exterior, and universal domination of black was unrelieved and irrefutable, I felt afraid, and I remembered the cry of the peacocks, who had also experienced this fear, and identifying with them, I felt even more afraid. But of course, Stevens does not reduce the idea of the poem to such a statement. For in some kinds of writing--and this is one of them--the concrete details used to describe a place or situation produce an understood thesis statement, and this is more effective

than the explicit statement, with its requisite topic plus assertion about the topic.

Structurally, all three poems are tight, with the sonnets adhering to the prescribed fourteen lines of iambic pentameter we all know so well. Writing students have a fascination for the sonnet structure, and I have always been surprised at the satisfaction they betray when I take them on a Cook's tour of the history of the sonnet from Petrarch to the present, examining English and Italian models, talking about octaves and sestets, three quatrains and a couplet, a combination of structures adding up to fourteen lines, and exactly what I mean by iambic pentameter. This is the sort of thing a contemporary composition student, who might have come to the English class right after a session of computer programming or data processing, can sink his or her teeth into. It is measurable. It is diagnosable. Notes can be taken. Blackboards can be filled with quantitative information. It makes students feel secure. It makes "great literature" seem accessible. But best of all, it makes students aware, when they least suspect that they are being taught this, that in fine writing thoughts are structured, the language is crafted, and proportionately very little is left to "the magic hand of chance."

These understandings about point of view, speaker, mood, tone, thesis statement, language, and structure are what the literary guide, the enlightener, to return to my idea of literary photosynthesis, has the special qualification, because of graduate training in literature, to proffer the contemporary composition student to whom Shakespeare, Keats, and Wallace Stevens have been presented as resources. As long as the intention is to take the student to that central impulse of a literary work that rings true to the student in terms of himself, both as a human being and as a writer, such vintage guidance is of abiding value.

Out of the discussions of "When in Disgrace," "When I Have Fears," and "Domination of Black" should grow a number of ideas for papers--comparisons of speakers or thesis statements, arguments for or against particular interpretations, defining melancholy and depression, or even questioning, on psychological grounds, whether the speaker in Shakespeare's sonnet is a stable fellow. Even the least sophisticated student can take on a personal essay like one of these: 1. Write about a time in your life when, like the

speaker in Shakespeare's sonnet, you felt outcast and despairing, until the remembrance of someone dear to you startled you into realizing you wanted to make a big investment in living and achieving. Or 2. Thinking of the speaker in Keats's sonnet, write a paper in which you take stock of your highest aims in life and consider how you would feel if something cataclysmic should prevent you from arriving at them. Or 3. Write about a time when y o u r private world and the world at large seemed bleak and menacing, and like the speaker in Stevens' poem, you felt afraid and as if there were no exit. At the very least the student can respond with an essay on the solitary angst of writing anything good at all and know that in doing so he or she has shared in a creative process known to great writers through the ages. And literary photosynthesis will have taken place.

Teaching Critical Thinking in the English Literature Survey Courses

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The English literature survey courses should and can be taught as an integral part of our junior and community college curricula. The first part of this paper will indicate that this "should" provides a new perspective on the argument that "everyone should read Beowulf," and is based on significant recent work in the theory of higher education. The second portion will then deal with six ways in which theory can become practice in our own literature classrooms.

Wallace A. Russell's recent article, "The Fiery Fall and Incredible Rise of Liberal Education" provides a useful survey the three reports which have appeared during the last year on the status of curriculum in higher education. The first of these, "Involvement in Learning," was submitted last October by the National Institute of Education to the Secretary of Education, Terrell H. Bell. The report recommended less specialization and fewer vocational courses in degree programs and suggested a return to at least two full years of liberal education as a part of all four-year curricula. It also recommended that the college curriculum provide students with the opportunity to develop greater skill in the areas of analysis, synthesis and evaluation, terms which may ring various bells for readers whose background in educational theory has included a nodding acquaintance with "Bloom's Taxonomy." The second of these three reports was written by William J. Bennett, who later succeeded Bell as Secretary of Education. Writing as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, in "To Reclaim a Legacy," he also criticized excessive narrowness and specialization and called for the central role of the humanities in the college curriculum. He further stressed the fact that liberal learning gives students a clearer relationship to the content and values of Western Civilization, in science and technol-

ogy as well as in the arts, literature, philosophy and history. (Russell 2-3) Most recently, in February, 1985, the Association of American Colleges published a report entitled "Integrity in the College Curriculum," and proposed a restructuring of undergraduate education around nine basic areas of experience. Several of these relate directly to the topic at hand, and are called, in the original language of the report:

1) Inquiry, abstract logical thinking, critical analysis
2) Literacy: reading, writing, speaking
3) Understanding numerical data
4) Historical consciousness
5) Science
6) Values
7) Art
8) International and multicultural experiences
9) Study in depth in one area

The report goes on to state, having expanded in some detail on each of the nine areas, that, "The problem with the American college curriculum is not that it has failed to offer up knowledge. The problem is that it offers too much knowledge with too little attention to how that knowledge has been created and what methods and styles of inquiry have led to its creation." (AAC report 24) Clearly, we have national support for the inclusion in our curricula of such liberal arts courses as the English literature survey. However, the question remains, to what end do we teach this particular course, if not only to provide knowledge? In other words, can we help our students learn how to learn not only for the content of this course, but as a part of their entire educational experience? Might this course be particularly well suited to such goals? And, a question which is at least as significant and probably more difficult to answer than any of the preceding: how can we restore, add or resuscitate such a course for students whose ability to succeed with this material seems markedly diminished, as compared to that of students of only a few years ago?

It seems logical to begin by surveying the theories of higher education which have recently described the learning and developmental level of the people in our classrooms. Marjorie Davis and Charles C. Schroeder have called some of them the "New Students," and they have indeed been identified in numerous studies as measurably different from many college students of fifteen and twenty

years ago. They differ not only in their apparent desire for more vocational training and for knowledge which translates directly into potential for economic gain, but, as those of us who teach in open enrollment institutions know, they are often students who would not have attended college at all under limited admissions standards. Davis and Schroeder suggest that Patricia Cross may be right in her definition of "New Students" as requiring more concrete, practical and immediate learning experiences. When a sample of nearly 1,100 private college freshmen was tested between 1978 and 1980 on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, these "New" students comprised 60 per cent of the sample. This instrument categorized such students as "sensing" learners, whereas the 40 percent who learned in what we might call more traditional, college-level styles were called "intuitive" learners. Since the creators of this instrument claim that currently as much as 75 percent of the general population may be comprised of the "sensing" type of learner, it follows that community college enrollment would indeed contain 60 percent or more of such students. (Davis and Schroeder 73)

This rudimentary description of the students with whom we're faced in many or most of our classrooms can be expanded, and elucidated, through a brief discussion of three major educational theorists: Jean Piaget, William Perry and Michael Basseches. Each has a descriptive scheme designed to explain the developmental processes involved in attaining adult levels of critical thinking. After briefly examining and comparing their ideas, it should be possible to investigate how our classrooms can more effectively help students to learn not only the content of English literature, but also the process of how to learn in a more critical, abstract and highly developed manner.

Jean Piaget, the Swiss scientist and psychologist, outlined his developmental theories in several major works written between 1926 and 1969. Originally published in French, his works have been slow to gain attention in the United States, not only for this reason, but also because his experimental methods were described by Piaget himself as "intuitive." Since he was interested in the entire span of development from infancy through adolescence, his data on very young children were often based entirely on observation. Older children were interviewed, given problems to solve and observed in Piaget's clinic; however as noted in Wadsworth's summary of

Piaget's major theories, "no two children ever received the same experimental treatment." In fact, three of the books were based primarily on Piaget's observations of his own children between 1925 and 1931. The later work became more rigorously scientific, and material in The Growth of Logical Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence, published in 1958, is based on the testing results of over 1500 subjects. (Wadsworth 1-8) Such Piagetian concepts as assimilation, accommodation, schema and equilibrium need not be treated extensively here. Rather the first chart in the appendix [Ed. note: the charts referred to in the paper are not provided in the printed version.] represents the four principle stages in Piaget's overall structure of cognitive development. The highest or most advanced of the four stages, formal operations, has been characterized as Piaget's description of the point at which critical thinking skills are achieved.

The sensory-motor stage occurs from birth to two years and moves from reflex activity to actual intentional uses of sensory and motor data in problem solving situations. The next stage, called preoperational, occurs from two through about seven years and includes what Piaget called the ability to arrive at prelogical solutions to problems. The idiosyncratic nature of both thought and language at this stage prevents the child from dealing with more logical constructs and problems. At the stage of concrete operations, from seven through approximately eleven years, the child has achieved a number of more sophisticated cognitive abilities. At this point, children can solve problems of ordering of size, can classify, and develop in their ability to deal with ideas of time, speed and causality. For example, children of five or six will identify a lump of sugar dissolved in a glass of water as having "vanished," while children of seven or eight state that the substance of sugar is retained, and at nine or ten they mention that its weight must also remain; by the age of eleven or twelve they can recognize that the raised level of the water after the lump of sugar is dissolved also indicates that its volume is conserved. (Wadsworth 98) This is the stage just prior to the development of formal operations, which Piaget saw as naturally occurring between the ages of eleven and fifteen. It is this last stage which had been, until recently, accepted as the fullest formal progress made by the individual toward adult levels of critical thinking.

In the stage of formal operations, the adolescent learns, according to Piaget, to solve "all types of problems." Cognitive structures mature, and problems in the five areas of combinatorial thought, verbal reasoning, hypothetical questions, proportion and conservation of movement can be solved. As an example, in a test of combinatorial thought, the child is presented with five jars of clear liquid, shown a yellow liquid and told that some combination of the clear liquids will produce this yellow color. Piaget's research demonstrated that up to the age of eleven the children combined two liquids at a time and then stopped their systematic searching, when they found that none of these combinations produced the desired reaction. At eleven or twelve they began to try all combinations of one, two and three liquids until they reached the answer by combining those numbered one, three and five. Another example, perhaps more easily transferable to the study of literature, involved hypothetical problems which required such assumptions as, "Suppose grass is red..." Prior to the development of formal operational thought, the child is unable to deal with such an argument independent of its content, and protests that grass is, in fact not red at all. After achieving the level of formal operations, the child can reason from such an illogical premise and recognizes that logic can operate independently of assumptions which are factually true. (Wadsworth 104)

Piaget acknowledged that despite the development of formal operational thought by about the age of fifteen, adolescents do appear to reason differently than adults. He cited the egocentricity of the adolescent period as the reason for this and suggested that a real job and its attendant responsibilities in the everyday world finally lead to the "decentering" needed to achieve fully adult thought and cognition. To quote again from The Growth of Logical Thinking: From Childhood to Adolescence, published by Piaget and Inhelder in 1958:

> Objectivity of thought with respect to conflicting issues is attained (and egocentrism lost) when the adolescent assumes adult roles in the real world and can differentiate the many possible points of view. (Wadsworth 112)

Throughout his description of the movement within and between stages, Piaget spoke of a recurrent egocentrism which accompanies

the attainment of each new level, but gradually diminishes as the higher structures are more fully assimilated. After the arrival at formal operations, he posited only "adult roles" as the mechanism whereby the last movement or "decentering" requisite to adult thought can occur. The work of William G. Perry, Jr., of Harvard suggests, however, that further, identifiable stages exist within that movement toward truly adult levels of critical thinking. Perry's scheme was developed on the basis of interviews he and over thirty colleagues conducted with college freshmen during a span of fifteen years.

These "positions," as Perry referred to them, actually comprise a total of nine (or ten, since position four is divided into four a) and four b) levels found within four major divisions. The next chart in the appendix represents these four basic positions: dualism, multiplicity, relativism and commitment in relativism. Overall definitions of each of these will precede the more precise delineation of the positions themselves. As descriptors for developmental points which occur beyond the age of fifteen, and indeed often coincide with the college years of eighteen to twenty-one or two, Perry's positions clearly follow and expand on much of Piaget's work. Their precise relationships to the stage of formal operations will comprise part of the final material in this section.

Dualism is the assertion that experience, meaning and the known universe can be divided into good and bad, right and wrong, yes and no. It is characterized by a firm belief that such answers do exist, for everything, and can be acquired if only sufficient effort is expended. If Beowulf doesn't seem to be a hero in contemporary terms, then differences between Anglo-Saxon and contemporary values couldn't possibly be the explanation. Multiplicity, the next higher stage or level, recognizes that a variety of opinions and values may exist in some areas. Its adherents believe, however, that in those instances it is virtually impossible to choose among them. Further, right answers are still seen as available in certain instances. Maybe Anglo-Saxon and modern values differed, but ours are probably still "better." In relativism, diverse opinions can be compared, analyzed and weighed. Knowledge is seen here as contextual as dependent on the area for consideration and those doing the considering. Choice is possible, although some areas remain in which reasonable disagreement may be inevitable.

Beowulf's actions may be more fully explicable in terms of Anglo-Saxon beliefs. Commitment in relativism, the last identified level, makes affirmation and choices among beliefs possible within the context of relativism. The individual sees his or her own agency as coming from within in such choices. (Perry 79-80) Now, Beowulf can be seen as an epic hero on the archetypal plane, but as also appearing in a work based in Anglo-Saxon Christian and pagan values and with its own structural requirements.

These, then, are the four major levels of development which Perry and his associates have suggested may occur, or at least begin, during the years of the college experience. The nine or ten more clearly defined positions within these stages are noted on the next chart. As they are explained, a characteristic question is included which a student might ask at each position of development. Perry becomes even more precise in the article, "Cognitive and Ethical Growth: The Making of Meaning," and defines the transitions between positions. For this survey, only the positions themselves are defined, as follows, paraphrasing Perry's student interviews:

1) Basic Duality: My task is to learn Right Answers. All teachers are authorities who know Right Answers.

   What's the Answer?

2) Multiplicity Prelegitimate: My task is to find the particular True Authorities who know right answers. (Read "good teachers.")

   What does the teacher give as the answer?

3) Multiplicity Legitimate but Subordinate: Some ambiguities seem to lead to right answers. But what's the difference between what's right and what They want?

   What questions does the teacher leave open--on the way to right answers?

4a) Multiplicity Coordinate: Oh--I see--no one is wrong, if Authority doesn't know. There's a double split between the rightness of Authority and the rightness of anybody on other questions.

So what's your opinion?

4b) Relativism Subordinate: Well...if you have to support your opinion, then maybe Authority itself has its own reasoning process, too. Then maybe ideas can be better or worse, in terms of reasoning and the way they're expressed, instead of just right or wrong.

So what's the support for your opinion?

5) Relativism: Everything has its own rules, its context. It's not a matter of what Authority wants, but of the need to be precise in each area, or to transfer what I've learned about how to think about things from one area to another.

Within what context do you find support for your opinion?

(Perry 80-90)

At this point, Perry states that students may retreat and escape from a world of relativism by returning to Position 2. He suggests that the political radicalism of the late sixties and early seventies may have been a way to return to a point at which dualism was still operable and Right Answers still existed outside the students themselves. He suggests further that students who are able to move to Position 6, "experience in themselves the origin of meanings, which they had previously expected to come to them from outside." (Perry 92) To return to definition of the final developmental positions:

6) Commitment Foreseen: So no one is Right, in the sense of being able to determine every answer and point of view for me. I have to begin thinking about where I stand in terms of ideas, actions.

Within what context do I find support for my opinions?

7) Initial Commitment: So I have to decide what's Right and acknowledge the complexities of knowledge, thought, action.

Why didn't that settle everything?

8) Commitment Questioned: Now I see that I have to balance beliefs, commitments, in terms of importance, energy, time. And I see that choices among courses of action and ideas occur continually over time.

Can I manage to balance my commitments?

9) Relativism Affirmed: This is the way things are. I need to find a balance, to realize that there are constantly experiences of doubt and tension if you're open to understanding the world around you. (Perry 92-96)

Perry's scheme, then, seems to apply to cognitive development at far higher levels than those present at Piaget's stage of formal operations, and to characterize what Piaget called the quality of "adult thinking." It's also important to note, that, as Perry remarks, "It is in the affirmation of Commitments that the themes of epistemology, intellectual development, ethics and identity merge ....Commitments structure the relativistic world by providing focus in it and affirming the inseparable relation of the knower and the known." (Perry 97)

Numerous experiments have been tried with curricular and course content based wholly or partially on the Perry scheme since it was first published in 1970. In addition, studies have examined the relationships between Piaget's stage of formal operations and the later development which Perry and others describe. Indeed Perry reports that one researcher has documented an actual decline in strictly formal operational abilities in an experimental population followed from high school through graduate school. As quoted by Perry, King has stated that, "logic, so necessary to solutions of 'puzzles' in physics, is inadequate for addressing 'problems' in life." (Perry 100) Further and more recent work with the upper

levels of cognition and critical thinking has been done by the third major theorist included in this survey, Michael Basseches of Clark University.

Basseches identifies three basic levels of adult cognitive development: universalism, relativism and dialectical thinking. Universalism is defined as a belief in, as its title suggests, fixed, universal systems and truths. He suggests that those whose thinking exists primarily at this level view any attempt at more relativistic reasoning as mere "sloppiness," possibly due to an inability to perceive genuine logic and order. (10)

Relativistic thinking, in this scheme, involves a positive feeling about diversity of opinions and ideas. However, this form of relativism declines to choose any system or value over another, and insists that such determinations are not only inappropriate but impossible. Just as, to revive an earlier example, a universalist might state that Beowulf wasn't a hero because he watched one of his men be killed by Grendel, a relativist would regard the question of his heroic status as susceptible to two equally valid cultural viewpoints, with no method for stating that one is more correct than the other. (11)

Basseches' third category, which he calls dialectical thinking, regards the creation of new ways of seeing, ordering and structuring the universe as the most valuable method of thought. Dialectical thinkers share with universalists the feeling that relativists are actually retreating from the search for order; they share with relativists the feeling that choosing one all-inclusive ordering should not cause an end to the process of inquiry. They would seek areas of synthesis and opportunities for further questioning in any attempt to balance differing viewpoints. For them the creative tension between Anglo-Saxon and modern values can illuminate our understanding of Beowulf as hero and of the poem itself. (11)

Basseches feels that he has continued tracing Piaget's formal operational stage into the realm of adult development. His research, like Perry's, involved tape recorded interviews, although questions and structure were of a more directive nature than those used by Perry. Information collected in this manner led Basseches to develop twenty-four "moves," which he divides into four major

schemata the individual uses to progress to more advanced levels of critical, dialectical thought. The four schemata are called "matter-oriented," "form-oriented," "relationship-oriented," and "meta-formal." The first move is the recognition of the traditional dialectical "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" model of thought; the last is an affirmation that multiple perspectives and transformations of thought are in themselves a valuable means of creating order. (74) If the goal of formal operations seems to have been "problem-solving," then the end, or rather open-ended goal of Basseches' dialectical stage would be the activity of "problem-finding."

If Piaget's stage of formal operations comprises the highest defined point in his developmental scheme, it would seem to correspond with the lowest stage for Perry and Basseches, those respectively labelled dualism and universalism. Similarly, Perry's more advanced stages of multiplicity and relativism would appear to at least partially correspond to Basseches' idea of relativistic thinking. At the upper points on these two schemes, Perry seems to suggest a kind of closure at the point that "Commitment in relativism" is seen as a positive state, although Perry does posit this stage as an ongoing process. Basseches labels the dialectical stage as one which has identifiable schematic points and changes within it, but also as a stage which must involve open-ended and continual comfort with the activities of restructuring, questioning, and problem-finding.

This research makes two significant general contributions to the specific pursuit of more effective classroom teaching in areas such as the English literature survey courses. First, if we accept the notion that the highest level of critical thinking is not achieved by the middle or end of the high school years, then we recognize that the college curriculum should logically address not only content but also, as mentioned earlier, the area of learning itself. Some theorists assert that thinking skills can be most effectively taught in separate courses and exercises, and should therefore be outside the domain of other classroom endeavors.

Although we may not yet have arrived at a professional consensus on the degree to which critical thinking skills should actually be taught within each class we are undeniably in possession of a valuable tool for understanding our students' levels and modes of

learning. The work of Whimbey and Feuerstein, reviewed by Glaser, might suggest particular exercises and two among many existing approaches for teaching critical thinking as an isolated skill. Suggestions for classroom applications given here will focus on acknowledging students' cognitive levels as an indicator for teaching style and, to some extent, for choices in course content, rather than teaching directly to individual stages or trying to promote unrealistic growth or progress to higher stages within only one or two semesters.

A second benefit of developmental research and theory is the manner in which it can compliment and illuminate previous work on learning styles and more recent exploration of moral and ethical development by Kohlberg, Gilligan and others. Joseph Williams has integrated the stage theories of Piaget and Perry with those of Kohlberg to produce an overall three-part scheme which he labels "pre-socialization," "socialization," and "post-socialization." This work is not included here due to its focus on moral/ethical implications, rather than on this study's more primary theme of academic content. These correlations are explored by Kohlberg and Gilligan, as well as Williams. Learning styles theory, however, has been popular over the past ten to fifteen years, and its insights mesh with and are expanded by developmental research. In fact, Perry raises the provocative question of whether learning styles may change and adjust as the individual moves through more advanced levels of cognitive development. (Perry 102) The chart of three learning styles systems certainly suggests not only correlation with the stage theories, but also a hierarchy of skills. The Myers-Briggs division into "sensing" and "intuitive" learning styles mentioned earlier can be seen as directly related to the movement from concrete to abstract styles noted by both Bernice McCarthy and Gregorc and Ward in their respective expansions and modifications of the original Kolb model from M.I.T. More concrete learners could certainly be seen as at the level of dualism and formal operations, tending to see the world in a universalist, either/or, problem-solving manner. Abstract learners could be seen as dealing with multiple and relative material, probably engaging in some degree of dialectic and more likely to find satisfaction in the activities associated with problem-finding. The most efficient and flexible learners are in learning styles theory, said to possess learning skills associated with all styles. If Perry is right,

and evolving stages also cause evolution in learning styles, the previous styles might still be available in the situations where they're needed. The student who is able to learn from concrete, hands-on experience as well as from profoundly abstract situations and presentations is undeniably more versatile and better equipped than the learner who has only one of these styles available. As McCarthy might say, they progress not necessarily up a ladder, but "around the circle" of learning styles.

In acknowledging these two principle benefits of developmental stage theory, that is, awareness of student levels for classroom planning and some integration of these levels with actual student learning style, we come naturally to the next portion of this study: just how do these students learn and why should I try to teach them a course such as the English literature survey? Or even if I know I should re-emphasize liberal learning, can I also promote skills in analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and not only problem-solving but problem-finding?

At this juncture, it seems appropropriate to return to the earlier reference to Bloom's taxonomy of knowledge. Benjamin Bloom's 1950 outline of the structure of knowledge within any one field fits quite logically into the overall theoretical idea of cognitive development of the individual. The basics of knowledge, understanding and application are at the level of dualism: they lead the student to the right answers within a single context. However, the ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate in multiple contexts occurs at higher points in the evolution of critical thinking. The last chart is an attempt to synthesize all of these systems into a descriptive model of the "New" student. Classroom examples will derive from the first semester of the survey course, the class within which these principles have been applied.

Perry's sample between 1970 and 1979 seems to have been characterized by a majority of students who were already at position 5 or 6 in the developmental hierarchy. (98) Remembering that the sample subjects in these studies were all Harvard-Radcliffe freshmen may reinforce our suspicion that the majority of students in our classrooms are nearer to stages of dualism and beginning multiplicity. That recognition can help us move from the airy heights

of theory to the practical realities of the classroom in six specific areas: 1) intrinsic worth of the subject matter, in terms of promoting cognitive growth as well as content knowledge; 2) content choices within the course; 3) lecture materials, particularly in terms of providing background and context; 4) class discussion and questioning; 5) writing assignments--topics and formats; and 6) testing, particularly test construction.

With reference to the first area, intrinsic cognitive worth of English literature, Claire Gaudiani, whose primary expertise is in the teaching of foreign languages and literature, feels strongly about teaching literature of other languages and other periods. She feels that the inclusion of such material in our curricula naturally promotes cognitive development by virtue of the need to widen contextual frameworks to understand it, to adopt more than simple dualism as a viewpoint. In a recent publication, Gaudiani is eloquently clear on these points:

Good writing, as I.A. Richards says, contains appraisals of human existence. It reminds readers that certain specific as well as certain general questions continue to matter. The systematic study of literature teaches us how to interpret relational systems, avoid simplistic thinking, develop judgment and taste. It combines cognitive activities like classification, discrimination, and exploration of facts and consideration of the nature of evidence with imaginative activities that reproduce for readers the sensuous experience of the text in mysterious ways. The study of literature develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills. . . In dealing with foreign (we can read, earlier) language texts, students can take nothing for granted. Being less familiar with the language, culture, history and author, the student must exercise a wide range of skills. Primary among them are the capacities to develop, test and affirm or recompose hypotheses; to recognize patterns of internal logic and external implications; and to draw conclusions from evidence. In short, the foreign language text trains students in some of the most taxing problem-solving skills required for work in the modern world. (Guadiani 295-96)

Evidently, Claire Gaudiani believes that the skills required for success in literature courses, especially those in foreign or earlier texts, promote all of the higher order thinking skills outlined by cognitive theorists.

The second classroom application involves choices for content and emphasis within the general rubric of the available subject matter. Because students' content background probably has not included previous contact with the material or at least not with much of it, in-depth study is both valid and necessary. Devoting three or four sessions to discussing Beowulf in terms of content, structure and theme may be more profitable for students than also attempting to rush through Sir Gawain and Piers Plowman. Students are also likely to find the Middle English versions of the Canterbury Tales at least forbidding, if not totally discouraging. One solution is to require students to be able to translate the first fourteen lines of the General Prologue on an exam, but to provide interlinear translations of the tales for assigned reading. If students do a paper on one or more additional tales they can choose a modern English prose or poetry translation, both because focus is then on the content of the tale and as an added inducement to read more Chaucer! Requiring the interlinear version for class discussion does limit the number of tales which can be assigned, and other instructors might choose to discuss additional tales in modern English versions. The point here is that the objectives to be considered for undergraduates at this stage of cognitive development seem to dictate a reasonable compromise between familiarity with the linguistic features of Middle English and access to the richness of Chaucer's tales, in terms of content, structure and social commentary. The same principle of depth before breadth builds the content knowledge necessary to develop skills of analysis at every point during the course, and can govern the choice of the number of Shakespeare sonnets, plays, etc. to be covered. If a thorough (if there is such a thing) reading of Hamlet gives students time to appreciate aspects of structure, theme and interpretation in reading Shakespearean tragedy, then they'll be able to use these skills in their semester-long Shakespeare courses, if they become English majors. If they don't, they will still gain more from careful study of one or two plays than from a haphazard, too-rapid trip through several in the midst of a survey course. This leads logically to the next concern, that of lecture materials. What should we include in order to give our students an optimal chance for both cognitive growth and content mastery?

Historical background is essential for our "New Students'"

understanding of materials read in the English literature survey. Their knowledge of English history, and of the history of Western Civilization in general, is likely to be rudimentary, at best. Each major segment of the course must begin with a history lecture which stresses not dates and places, but general events and concerns of the era. These data have to be reiterated as the literature is discussed; if students begin to relate Chaucer's pilgrims to the evolving class structure of the later medieval period, then the groundwork for moving to Perry's stages of multiplicity and relativism is being created. Hand-outs, charts, blackboard writing and films seem to be enormously helpful in the lecture situation, far more than would necessarily be needed by the more traditional student. The melding of such concrete, visual input with orally-presented lecture material helps students grasp and retain more detail.

It may help to hand out copies of lecture notes to students who want to compare them with their own. The principle is, as always, to make content knowledge available so that not only understanding and application, but the higher levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the literary materials can become possible.

Discussion and questioning can also be conducted for these students as a means to promote higher order thinking skills. Content questions, the who, what, when, and where, will be most easily answered by our "New" students, and should be fully covered before more analytical inquiry is attempted. Far more than with traditional students it's important to establish that students know exactly who the Pardoner and the Summoner are before attempting to assess their function and import as characters. When they realize that they can follow the plot in Hamlet or in selections from Paradise Lost or Pilgrim's Progress, they are far more likely to be comfortable in attempting to speculate on the how? why? and what if? of a given work. Small group discussions can be extremely fruitful, in allowing the quieter student to "be wrong" without enduring total exposure. In one class session, four small groups ferreted out the main ideas in one of the four Bacon essays assigned for that day; students then chose a "guest lecturer" from each group to present their conclusions at the blackboard, complete with significant line references. Enough familiarity and comfort at the level of data enable students to dare to move beyond "What's

the right answer?" to "What's your opinion?" and even, perhaps, to venture toward, "What do I think--and why?" As with lecture notes, summaries of assigned readings might be made available after some period of discussion has occurred; a plot summary shouldn't substitute for reading the assignments, but can fill in the gaps not covered in discussion or lecture.

The fifth area, the assignment of papers in the course, can be similarly informed by a simultaneous concern for content and cognitive growth. The first paper might be a character study and can be based largely on assigned reading and lectures. If the class reads "The Wife of Bath's Tale," and the student is able to analyze well enough to extract a coherent character study from those materials, that's a good first step toward learning to write a literary paper. Hand-outs can describe the process of finding a topic, narrowing it, developing a preliminary thesis, testing it against the text, revising the thesis and writing the paper. Students come to the office with a first or second draft, and seem to welcome that opportunity to be shown problems in content as well as in mechanics and grammar. As the paper assignments progress, students may next be asked to write an explication of a speech or an analysis of a scene from Shakespeare which was not covered in depth in class, still relying on textual, rather than critical sources. The third paper is an analysis of a metaphysical or Cavalier poem not covered in class; in addition, if the student has found a poet whom we haven't covered in the syllabus, it helps to require a brief biographical summary, just to be sure that they know whose work they're writing about! The fourth paper is on an essay not covered in class, usually by Addison and Steele or Johnson. Again, they are not required to include critical sources, although by this point in the course, many choose to do so. Progress in their ability to analyze the work itself seems sufficient for the first semester of the survey; if, in addition, they attempt to synthesize information from several sources, even more cognitive growth has occurred.

The sixth area of course materials is the thorny problem of test construction, i.e., should my tests be objective or essay? One answer to that query is yes, both. Students who are operating most efficiently at the level of dualism, with the materials of information, understanding and application, will be able to display

their mastery in true-false, identification, short answer, and, of course, multiple choice--the type of objective question which can most successfully be constructed to also require at least some analysis in order to identify the correct choice. Objective items should be combined with essay questions that require the student to attempt some analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the course materials. A fifty-fifty split at the beginning of the course can be shifted toward the end of the semester, so that fewer objective items are included. In addition, one essay question on each test can ask for a summary of major historical and literary currents during the era under consideration; writing this answer requires a blend of application and analysis, and enables students to work with both skills. Shifting the emphasis in test construction, like moving the paper assignments away from readings already covered in class, is designed to promote student cognitive growth after establishing confidence and comfort with course materials. If it actually adds measurably to cognitive growth, it has truly provided a double benefit. The student whose first paper argues that Beowulf wasn't really a hero and whose last one explores the simultaneous presence of reverence and wit in Addison's "Westminster Abbey" is unusual but not unique!

In summary, awareness of our students' learning levels and styles can certainly enable us to feel less frustrated with their inability, in many cases, to think and appreciate as we do. Nor should we blame ourselves if a one or two-semester course still doesn't result in a student who speaks and writes as brilliantly and passionately about literary materials as we'd prefer. What we can and must do, in order to preserve these courses as part of our liberal arts curricula, is, first, make the material accessible to the students at their point of entry--a point which we have called dualism, formal operations, the more concrete end of the reasoning hierarchy. Once our methodology has helped them to grasp the data of the course, the background detail, factual matters, formal concerns, yes or no aspects, then they can begin to analyze, synthesize and evaluate, and to find some comfort with the dialectical tension of many possibilities, many answers.

On one recent morning, several students began to argue about Hamlet's indecisive pattern of behavior through the first four acts of the play. One of the women in the class said, "Okay, so Hamlet

is in his twenties, maybe even thirty. Why doesn't he do something? I mean, hasn't he had any experiences in his life that help him take charge a little more?" To which another woman responded, "Well, even if he has, what's normal about being told by a ghost that your uncle killed your father? I mean, what could possibly prepare you for this, anyway? How could anybody know how to react?" And a young man added, "Yeah, I mean we talked about the Renaissance being a time when people were interested in questions of action versus inaction, and look at the situation this guy is in. I mean, he's really under a lot of stress! And when he did do something, he stabbed the wrong guy!" And so it goes, with the students using their information about plot and background to try to reason through the complexities of one of our most intriguing literary problems. When I said, "You know, this is part of the discussion that's been going on for over three hundred years," there were some nods and smiles of recognition, some puzzled looks.

The tool of cognitive and developmental theory suggests that students who can't be comfortable with this kind of diversity are not necessarily either slow or recalcitrant; they're simply still finding their feet in relativism, and may not be able to reach that stage of development during the weeks and months they spend in our classrooms. However, we can at least appreciate their positions, try to assist them in their own particular journeys and feel more genuinely their need for academic understanding and support. As Perry has said, "Many would hope to encourage in their students the values of Commitment. . .To meet this promise, we must all learn how to validate for our students a dialectical mode of thought. . .and then to assist them in honoring its limits. To do this, we need to teach dialectically--that is, to introduce our students, as our greatest teachers have introduced us, not only to the orderly certainties of our subject matter but to its unresolved dilemmas. This is an art that requires timing, learned only by paying close attention to students' ways of making meaning." (109) This study has been designed to offer some tools that will enable us all to pay closer attention to our own students' ways of making meaning as they study English literature.

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214

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Honors Programs and Literature in the Community College

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Summary

Moraine Valley Community College began planning an honors program during the 1983-84 academic year. As part of the planning process, Patricia McKeague, the founding Director, and Christine White, the Director of Research, conducted a survey on honors programs in League for Innovation institutions.

Some of the major findings of the study as reported by Director White are as follows:

Most honors programs are planned (for an average time of one year) by both administrators and faculty. Usually there is a paid director of the program who is responsible for implementing the program by budgeting, scheduling, and recruiting.

In existing programs, the mean number of students involved is 71. Students generally enter the program by meeting a set of criteria which generally involve scores on the ACT or SAT, rank in high school class, GPA, or recommendations. The most common instructional differences in regular and honors classes are additional reading and more in-depth discussion.

Full-time faculty most often teach the honors classes which have an average enrollment of 15 students. Overall, the completion rate in honors classes is 12 percent higher than the rate in regular classes. Patricia McKeague, who directed Moraine Valley's Honors Scholar Program during the planning stage, reported the following benefits of an honors program:

The students benefit because of challenging learning experiences, in-depth subject exploration, and increased peer/faculty in-

teraction. Most programs also offer scholships to students meeting specified criteria. Faculty members benefit because of motivated students, smaller class sizes, renewed challenge, and institutional recognition. In addition, the institution itself benefits because honors programs attract top students, challenge faculty, enhance institutional image, and generally invigorate the entire college.

When a program is implemented, the director is faced with both mundane and rewarding tasks. Len Jellema, the Director of Moraine Valley's program, discussed the issues of budgeting and scheduling. These behind-the-scenes activities consume a good deal of time, as does the major job of recruiting for the program. The methods used by Moraine Valley include direct mailings, high school visitations, and phone contacts. Actually, the personal contact with the honors students and their parents help make the job of director an enjoyable experience.

John Sullivan, who taught the first group of honors students, reported that while the students were not geniuses, the great majority were highly motivated and responsible. With a few exceptions, the students completed assignments on time and were willing to revise their papers when asked. In class discussions of literary works, the students participated at a higher level than usual and were more willing to take risks in offering personal evaluations. In peer editing sessions, they managed to interact with each other in an informal and relaxed atmosphere while remaining on task. As an instructor, Professor Sullivan felt freer to let go of some of the "control" he exercises in regular classes, and he introduced more challenging material for study and discussion. According to Professor Sullivan, teaching students who were mature and success-oriented was a delight. He was more excited about teaching and more anxious to try new things. Teaching an honors section was a great way to recharge intellectual batteries. He highly recommended it for any teacher who fears he is on the edge of burn-out and cannot afford the luxury of a sabbatical.

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